THE ULTIMATE MUSIC GUIDE

GEORGE HARRISON

DELUXE FULLY UPDATED EDITION

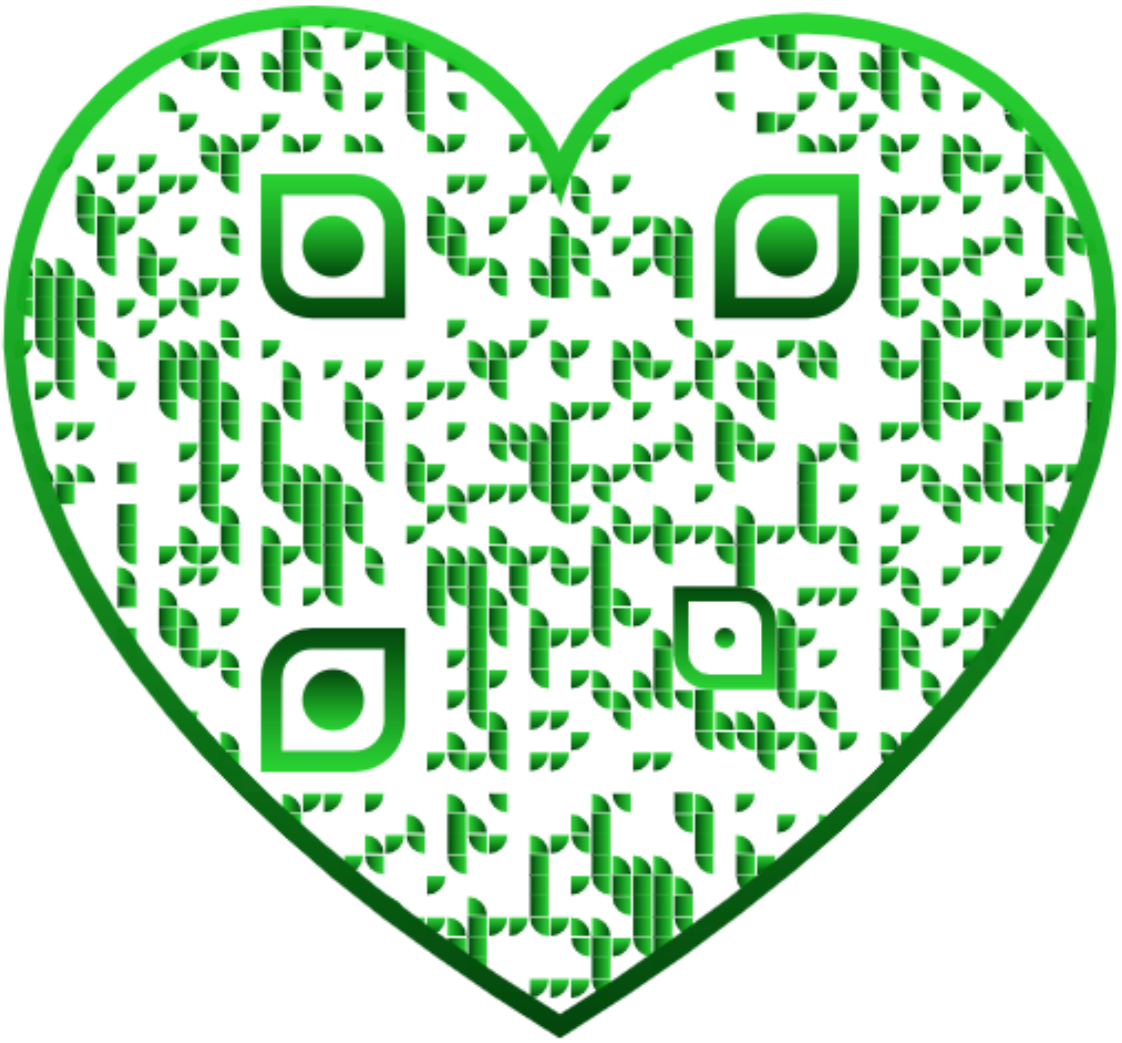
WHEN WE WAS FAB
Beatles hijinks, rediscovered

ALL THINGS!
Every album, in depth

"I CAN ONLY DO ME" GET BACK
...The GEORGE edit

HALLELUJAH! George Harrison
From THE BEATLES to BRAINWASHED: the full spiritual journey

FROM THE MAKERS OF **UNCUT**



Heart on his sleeve

WHEN I last talked to anyone who knew George Harrison, it was about how he played the guitar. In the early 1960s, Brian Griffiths ("Griff") along with his pals John Gustafson ("Gus") and John Hutchinson ("Hutch") was a member of The Big Three. Favourites at the Cavern (where they recorded their debut EP) and in Hamburg, the band knew The Beatles before there was much screaming.

Gus told me about how he once met a sheepish George in Liverpool, shortly after his premature return from Hamburg. George told Gus that Stuart Sutcliffe had recently left the band, and if he wanted to have a go, The Beatles were looking for a bass player. Griff, meanwhile, remembered George as someone eager to learn.

Aware of the spikier nature of his own tone, George asked the other guitarist for some advice on achieving a slicker and more accomplished kind of sound. Griff remembered George as a "very English" guitarist and also his enquiry: "How do you make the notes *flow*...?"

When you're introducing a magazine dedicated to a musician like George Harrison, it's a pretty helpful choice of words, illuminating aspects of some Georges we think we already know. There's George the recessive Beatle, happy to try to sink into the shadow of popular music's most powerful spotlight by smoothing out his sound. There's George the seeker after spiritual enlightenment, looking to pass easefully but meaningfully from one state to the next.

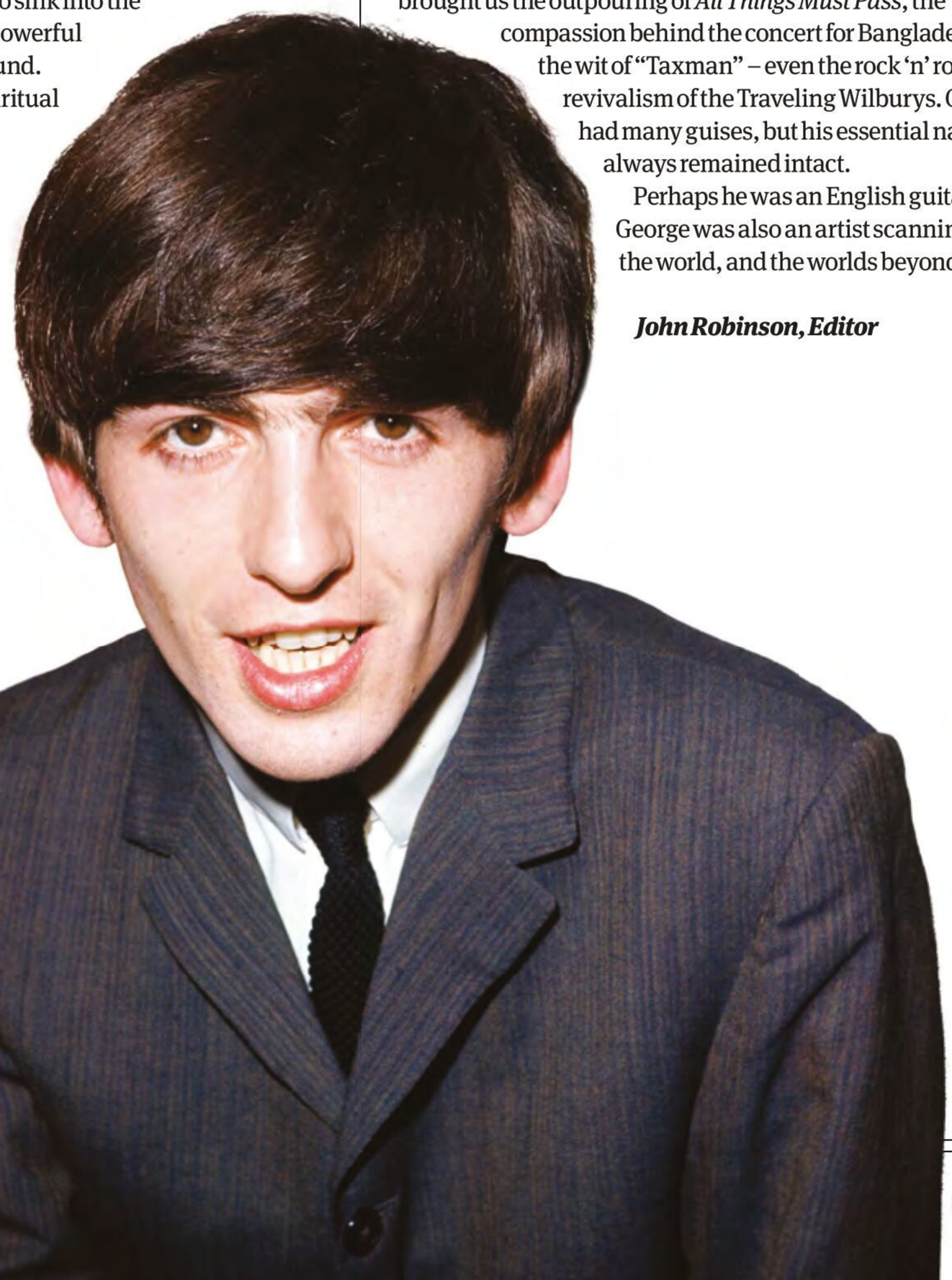
Really, though, it reveals more about George simply as self-critical individual, an important part of the man and his music that you'll find emerging constantly throughout the career covered in depth in this new magazine. As important as was the output he made while attempting to transcend the material world – his abiding friendship with Ravi Shankar and affinity for the music of India – much of his most characterful work comes from his interrogation of life and its problems. He wrote "Wah-Wah" from his classic, recently remastered, *All Things Must Pass* after his walk-out on The Beatles during the Get Back sessions.

If Apple was a political vehicle for John, a crucible for new talent for Paul and a place with green carpets for Ringo, for George it was a place to take stock. "Getting back" was a McCartney phrase, but it's a George sentiment. As leery as he may have been in the limelight and the consequences of being a worldwide celebrity, he knew as much as anyone that playing rock music again would be a possible way down from the studio-based experiments of *Pepper*. To read him talking about working with Jackie Lomax, or Elvis, or Little Richard is someone telling it like it is, even if no-one was giving him their full attention.

Musically, George wore his heart on his sleeve. It didn't always reap huge rewards: "Only A Northern Song", his thinly veiled gripe about songwriting and its royalties was said to have made George Martin shudder. But this inability to conceal his feelings also brought us the outpouring of *All Things Must Pass*, the compassion behind the concert for Bangladesh, the wit of "Taxman" – even the rock 'n' roll revivalism of the Traveling Wilburys. George had many guises, but his essential nature always remained intact.

Perhaps he was an English guitarist. But George was also an artist scanning round the world, and the worlds beyond.

John Robinson, Editor



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george harrison

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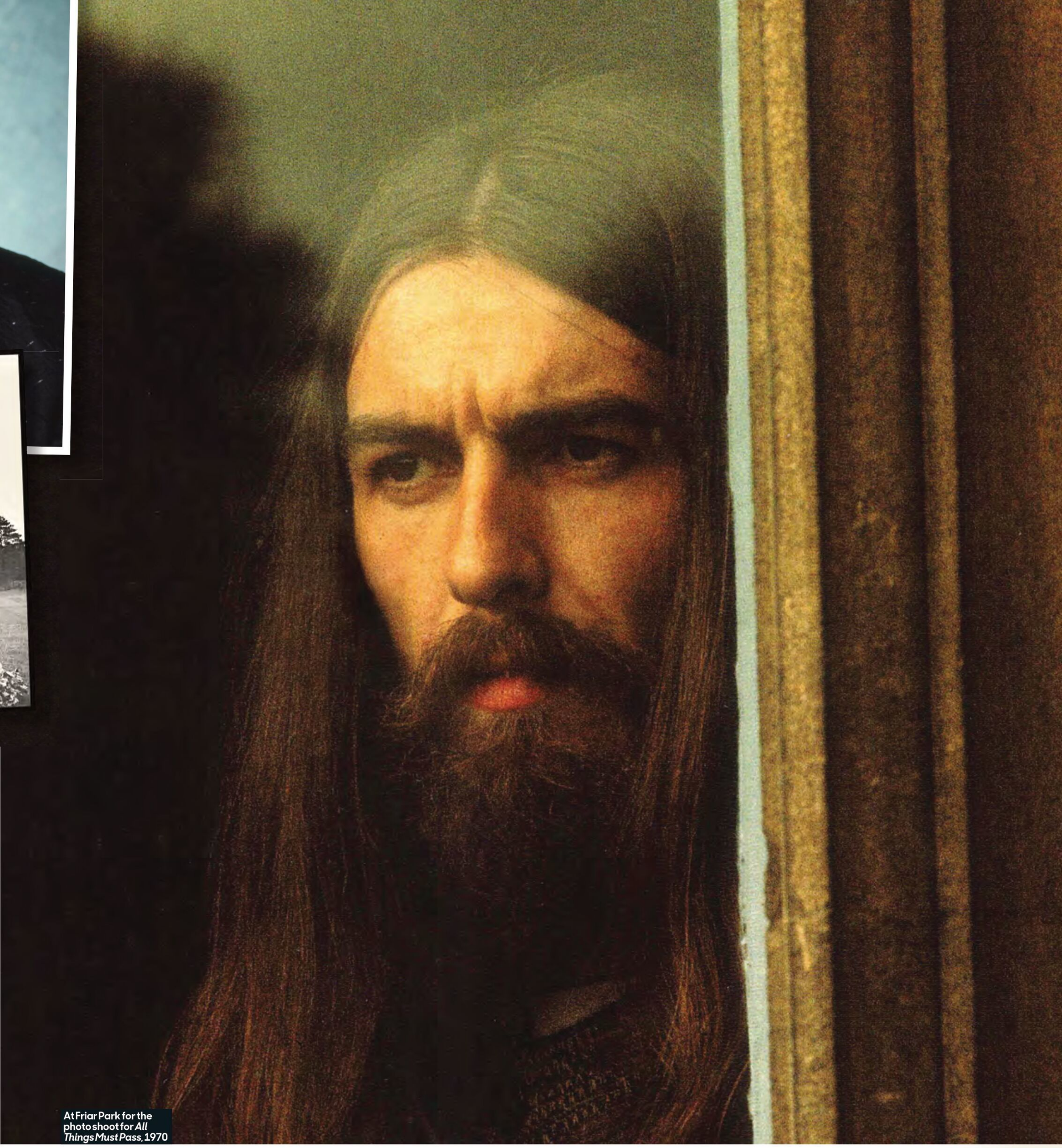
An intimate encounter with a lonely Beatle...

George Harrison, Los Angeles, December, 1986

The Beatles announce the production of *Yellow Submarine*, 1967

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES, AARONRAPOPORT/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES



At Friar Park for the photo shoot for *All Things Must Pass*, 1970

BARRY FEINSTEIN

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THE BEATLES

THE BEATLES 1960–65

RELEASED 1960–1965

Don't bother him! How the musical curiosity of the "quiet one" helped fuel the lightning advances of the Lennon–McCartney songwriting partnership. BY NIGEL WILLIAMSON

WHETHER John Lennon and Paul McCartney realised it or not, they could never have done it without George Harrison. Beatles history can sometimes reduce Harrison's role in the early years to little more than that of a glorified sideman, an accomplished guitarist who embellished the songs of the group's two principal writers – but who had to wait until late in the day and "Something" to come into his own.

It's a forgivable impression. The first four Beatles albums included just one Harrison composition among the collected 55 tracks. By 1967 and *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*, Lennon and McCartney had delivered around 100 songs, including a dozen chart-topping singles. In the same five years, meanwhile, The Beatles had recorded just eight Harrison compositions.

The mere numbers, however, obscure Harrison's true role: a more nuanced participation and influence behind the scenes. In particular, how George carved out a role for himself as an adventurer: directly or indirectly responsible for much of The Beatles' innovation, not merely supporting Lennon and McCartney but actively propelling them forwards to explore new sounds and styles. Simply put, The Beatles could not have made the journey from "She Loves You" to "Nowhere Man" without him.

In the first flush of Fabdom, the media glibly assigned each Beatle a distinctive character. McCartney was the smooth one, Lennon the acerbic one and Ringo Starr the joker in the pack. Harrison –still a teenager when The Beatles first charted – was simply labelled "the quiet one". As it turned out, a more instructive nickname might have been "the inquisitive one".

George carved out a role for himself as an adventurer

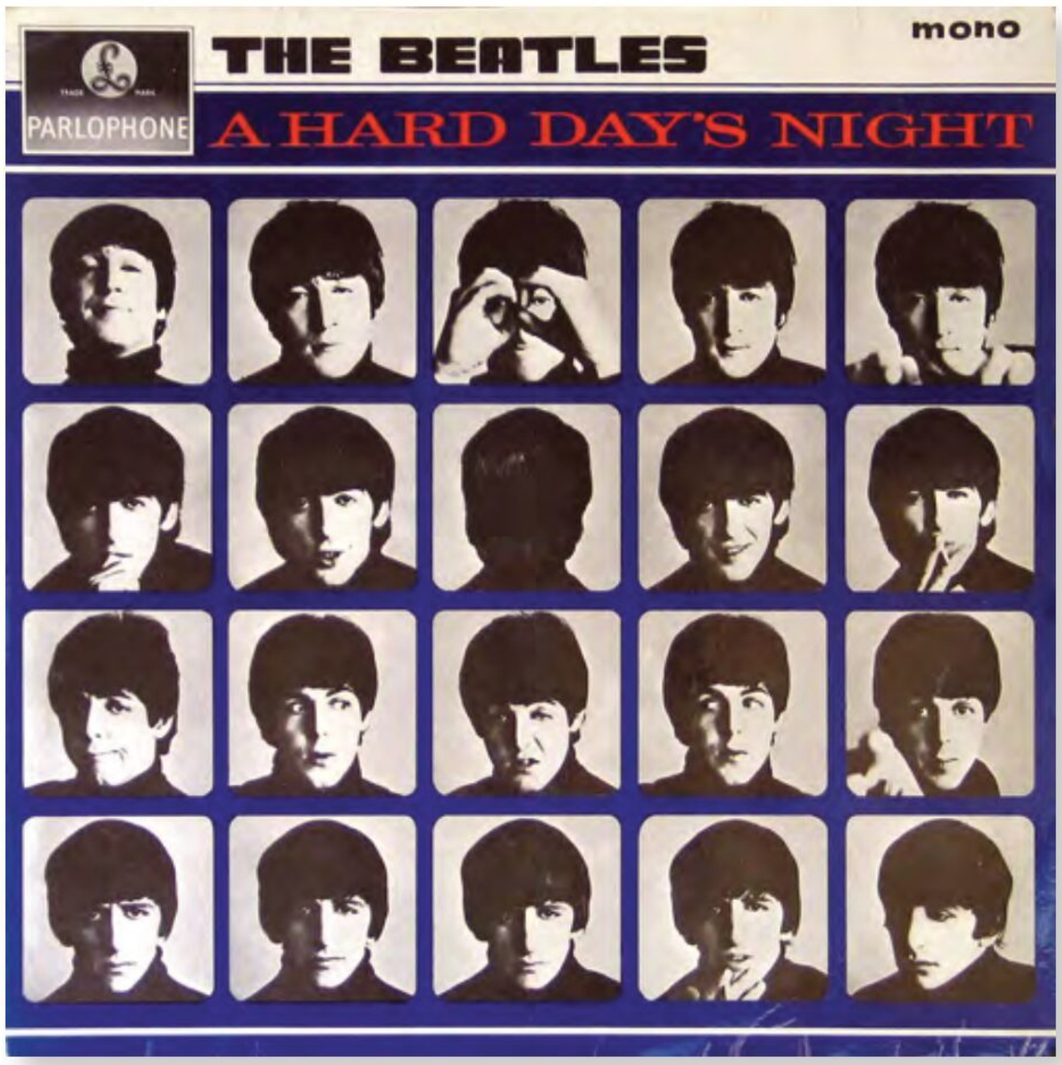
Marginalised by the dominant Lennon-McCartney partnership, George sublimated his creativity into sonic exploration – which in turn fed back into Lennon-McCartney's work. Harrison's boundless musical curiosity provided an impetus that helped to inspire them to move beyond The Beatles' early mix of beat and ballads.

He assumed the role early. The source of The Beatles' first musical inspiration was the American rock'n'roll and R&B records flooding into Liverpool via the docks – but it was Harrison who was the first to actually visit the promised land to explore the motherlode. Six months before The Beatles landed at JFK to launch the British Invasion, he took three weeks off from the Beatlemania already raging at home to visit his sister in Benton, Illinois – and also to take in New York and St Louis, returning home with armfuls of records by the likes of Booker T & The MG's and Bobby Bland.

His imported sounds – unavailable in Britain at the time –would soon be informing The Beatles' musical development. Back in Europe, meanwhile, he then changed the way The Beatles thought about songwriting when he bought a copy of Bob Dylan's *Freewheelin'* in a Paris record shop and played it to Lennon. It's fair to say that it had a profound and lasting effect on both of them.

PLEASE PLEASE ME • THE BEATLES
mono
PARLOPHONE
THE BEATLES
PLEASE
PLEASE ME
with Love Me Do
and 12 other songs

PARLOPHONE
with
the
beatles
mono


PARLOPHONE
THE BEATLES
mono
A HARD DAY'S NIGHT

PARLOPHONE
EMI
BEATLES
FOR
SALE
mono

PARLOPHONE
EMI
THE BEATLES
mono
HELP!

RUBBER SOUL

George's curiosity and willingness to experiment extended to his own sounds. He took up an electric 12-string Rickenbacker guitar on *A Hard Day's Night*, a year before The Byrds made it their trademark sound. That's not even to mention the Beatle who opened up a new world of psychedelic possibilities when he discovered Indian music in 1965 and turned up to the *Rubber Soul* sessions with a sitar in hand.

Still, George's share of the actual songwriting was an issue. Folklore tends to hold that everything was fab and gear in The Beatles' world until the death of Brian Epstein – and it was only in the absence of his sage guidance that rivalries and resentment developed. In truth, from the outset Harrison needed sharp elbows to get Lennon and McCartney to take his songwriting ambitions seriously.

It's juvenilia, but as a writer, George was in there from the off. His first composition, "In Spite Of All the Danger", was recorded by The Quarrymen in 1958, with a never-to-be-repeated writing credit "McCartney-Harrison". (Paul later claimed that George had simply played the guitar solo. The track eventually appeared on *Anthology 1* in 1995.) Three years later in Hamburg in 1961, The Beatles recorded the instrumental "Cry For A Shadow" – a punning cousin of The Shadows' "Apache" – with a similarly rare credit: "Lennon-Harrison".

He might have left it there and become a semi-peripheral figure, as the ennui-stricken Brian Jones did once the Jagger-Richards songwriting partnership was up and running. But Harrison was made of sterner stuff and – tentatively, and with scant encouragement from Lennon and McCartney – he gradually began to test his chops as a writer.

"Paul and John wrote all the songs in the beginning, and they did write great songs, which made it difficult to break in or get some action," George said later. "They had such a lot of tunes and automatically thought that theirs should be priority."

George's early songs might have punched more weight in Freddie & The Dreamers or The Remo Four (maybe even The Hollies) but it was his (mis)fortune to have joined a group with the major songwriting partnership of the 20th century. He had a more legitimate grievance when it came to the material he sang on Beatle records. With their loyal individual fanbases, it made sense that everyone got a go. But at times it could seem that George was further down the vocal pecking order than even Ringo.

After assigning "Do You Want To Know A Secret" (a song Lennon rated so highly his demo ends with the sound of a flushing toilet) as the "George song" on The Beatles' debut album *Please Please Me*, Lennon noted tartly, "I thought it would be a good vehicle for him because it only had three notes and he wasn't the best singer in the world."

Consciously or not, all too often it seemed that Lennon and McCartney regarded George as an auxiliary rather than an equal. When Dick Lester, the director of *A Hard Day's Night*, wanted a Harrison showcase for the film, John and Paul gave George the throwaway "I'm Happy Just To Dance With You". McCartney later dismissed the song as "a slim little premise", while Lennon disparagingly noted that he would "never have sung it myself". The message was clear: "We don't think this song is up to snuff, so we'll let you sing it."

Nonetheless, both on and off the records, George played a vital part in the joyous presentation of the "rattle your jewellery"-era Beatles. Although history reckons, with some reason, Lennon to have been the band's wit, it was George who could see the thrilling cheek in telling an American press conference that he had in fact "just had" a haircut or George Martin that he didn't like his tie.

Even if Lennon and McCartney kept him the junior partner, Ringo, certainly, was a fan. "All right, George..." he shouts during "Boys", before Harrison delivers his pitch-perfect Carl Perkins-style solo on the first album. Come *Beatles For Sale* he's still at it. On a cover of Perkins' "Honey Don't", there's Ringo with the shout-out: "Rock on, George, one time for me!"

As well he might: George's musical contributions were becoming more vital and fluent all the time. His reverbed guitar solo on "I Saw Her Standing There" was a revelation, and his innovative playing on the single "She Loves You" was even better, all gleaming Rickenbacker arpeggios. Second album *With The Beatles* (1963) found Harrison clanging mightily on "Money (That's What I Want)".

A Hard Day's Night (1964) featured no Harrison compositions but represented a major advance in the sophistication of his guitar-playing – not least thanks to his discovery of the Rickenbacker 12-string, which gave much of the album a ringing, chiming tone. It's heard to fine effect on "I Should Have Known Better" and "Any Time At All". Other notable Harrison contributions include a wonderfully concise guitar solo on "Can't Buy Me Love" and the lovely four-note signature in "And I Love Her", which McCartney later acknowledged was entirely Harrison's idea and probably warranted a co-writing credit.

The few songs Harrison did manage to smuggle on to The Beatles' early albums didn't on their own offer much inkling of the pivotal nature of his contributions or his later blossoming as a writer. "Don't Bother Me" on *With The Beatles* was written when ill in bed in a Bournemouth hotel while on tour, and like several of Harrison's early songs it had a decidedly grouchy message (*"Go away and leave me alone/I've got no time for you now"*). As his first attempt at

CRITICS' VERDICT

PLEASE PLEASE ME
"The title tune and 'Love Me Do' are well known, but there are 12 other thrillers, including [...] 'Boys', with drummer Ringo Starr shining, and a pippin of a duet on 'Misery' by John and Paul McCartney; and lead guitarist George Harrison is powerfully evident throughout."
Allen Evans, NME, April 5, 1963

WITH THE BEATLES
"The highlight? To my mind, 'All My Loving'. This John Lennon–Paul McCartney original has an instantly recognisable melody line, taken at mid-tempo."
Alan Smith, NME, November 15, 1963

A HARD DAY'S NIGHT
"I don't think this album has the uninhibited, joyous drive of the former Beatles LPs, but it is still way out ahead of rivals."
Allen Evans, NME, July 3, 1964

BEATLES FOR SALE
"Double tracking is used, but there are no gimmicks. The music is honest and again displays The Beatles' success formula – talent."
Chris Welch, MM, November 14, 1964

HELP!
"'I Need You' was written by George and features him dual-tracking, with John and Paul chanting lustily. A great sound on this track, with a throbbing up-tempo beat and supporting handclaps."
Derek Johnson, NME, July 23, 1965

RUBBER SOUL
"Without a shade of doubt, The Beatles' sound has matured, but also seems to have become a little subdued."
MM, December 4, 1964

TRINITY MIRROR / MIRRORPIX / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

The Beatles performing on *The Ed Sullivan Show* during their US tour, February 1964

TRACKMARKS

THE BEATLES
WITH THE BEATLES (1963)
George songs:
Don't Bother Me
4/10

THE BEATLES
HELP! (1965)
George songs:
I Need You **6/10**
You Like Me Too Much
5/10

THE BEATLES
RUBBER SOUL (1965)
George songs:
If I Needed Someone
7/10
Think For Yourself
6/10

challenging the Lennon-McCartney duopoly, it showed he clearly had a way to go.

"I don't think it's a particularly good song," he acknowledged. "It mightn't even be a song at all. But at least it showed me that all I needed to do was keep on writing, and then maybe eventually I would write something good."

In the event it would be another two years before The Beatles recorded another Harrison-penned number, when a brace of his songs appeared on *Help!* (1965). "I Need You", a slight, melancholy number written for Pattie Boyd, featured the experimental use of a foot-controlled tone pedal, which was hooked up to the volume of the guitar and worked as an early kind of wah-wah device. "You Like Me Too Much", meanwhile, was more of a conventional pop tune.

Neither song could match the boldness of Lennon or the urbanity of McCartney, but their inclusion set a precedent and clearly gave Harrison a vital confidence boost. Henceforth, every Beatles album, with the solitary exception of *Sgt Pepper* (with one), would feature at least two of his numbers.

His increasing confidence as a writer was immediately evident on 1965's *Rubber Soul*. "If I Needed Someone" reflected a new line of interest and exploration, and was his most successful effort to date, the song's quasi-modal, eastern cadences buttressed by George Martin's harmonium and some pealing 12-string guitar. Meanwhile, the inventive chord sequence of "Think For Yourself" represented another significant advance in musicality.

Elsewhere on the album his guitar-playing hit new peaks, as the familiar Rickenbacker and Gretsch tones were augmented by an arsenal of Fender Stratocasters and Telecasters. These gave a harder, tougher rock edge to the likes of "Nowhere Man", "Drive My Car" and the contemporaneous single "Day Tripper". The major event of the album, though (in fact of George's career), had its origins outside it, and didn't involve the guitar at all.

"I just needed to keep on writing"

It had arrived while filming *Help!*, when Harrison first came across the sitar, a discovery that was not only to alter his musical vision but to change his life – and lead to an enduring interest in Indian culture and spirituality. In the meantime, he took his discovery – and a renewed sense of purpose – to the recording studio.

Harrison's fascination with the sitar had intensified on The Beatles' 1965 American tour during a day he and Lennon spent tripping on LSD with David Crosby. On this day, Crosby introduced him to the recordings of Ravi Shankar.

Harrison actually only plays sitar on one track on *Rubber Soul*, on Lennon's "Norwegian Wood", and Ravi Shankar was apparently not impressed at all. Such was the impact of the inspired juxtaposition, however, it felt as if the instrument was on every track, played with tremendous expertise. It was a breakout moment in pop history: precisely the point at which The Beatles transformed themselves from being geniuses of romantic guitar pop into audacious sonic innovators.

By the time of *Rubber Soul*, The Beatles had already created a musical revolution – to which Harrison had made a monumental contribution. In a way, though, his journey was only just beginning. ॐ

CYRUS ANDREWS/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

"It's like winning the pools!"

Beset by faulty airplane doors and the sharp claws of Beatlemania, GEORGE HARRISON, 20, has reason to thank his lucky stars. Pressed for his opinion, he reflects on his past life – electrician's apprentice, Quarryman, Hamburg evictee – and his new one in the eye of the storm. "We've never really minded screamers," he says. "They pay the money, don't they?"

Nascent Beatlemania in early 1963 following the Fabs' return from their fifth and final Hamburg residency

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

Ain't the sweet: George with his Gretsch 6128 Duo Jet guitar in the Cavern Club

NME 16|08|63

GEORGE HARRISON leaned against a table in Liverpool's Blue Angel club, idly tapping the green baize as he looked through a swirl of cigarette smoke. It was 1am... and George was in a reflective mood as we talked about his role in the success story of The Beatles.

He sipped a Pepsi-Cola. "You know, The Beatles have almost been my career – I had only one other job; lasted two months.

"I left Liverpool Institute when I was 17, then I worked for an electrician. Rewiring and that kind of thing. But I couldn't stick it. I liked music too much.

"Besides, I'd met Paul while I was at school and we both had this interest in guitars. Paul actually had a trumpet at first – I remember we always used to be playing 'When The Saints Come Marching In'. On and on, always 'The Saints'!

"Who knows, The Beatles might have had a 'Liverpool trumpet sound' now, if Paul could have sung and played at the same time! He got himself a guitar in the end, and then we met John. I didn't realise it until recently, but John and I both went to the same primary school, Dovedale Road. We never met until we were 16 or 17.

"At one time – laugh! – I used to have a group of my own called The Rebels, or some such name.

"Later on I appeared at British Legion halls and working men's clubs with The Quarrymen. They were John, Paul and myself. But it wasn't steady. I did a bit of freelancing for a while. In fact, at one stage I think I was in about three groups all at the same time!

"I remember when Paul and I used to play guitar, and John would just sing without any instrument. We were on a Buddy Holly kick in those days, with numbers like 'Think It Over' and 'It's So Easy'.

"We certainly had some laughs. We did a Carroll Levis discoveries show in Manchester once, and Billy Fury was at the first audition. He was Ronald Wycherley then, and he did 'Margot' for his number.

"Sitting by a fire with your slippers on watching telly. That's the life!"

GEORGE HARRISON

"I think we were Johnny & The Moondogs at that particular time. You were judged by the audience applause, you know, but we had to catch a train home before the end. We never did find out if we'd won! But Billy passed his audition, I remember that.

"It's funny, the Cavern is a home-from-home for us in Liverpool today, but they didn't used to be too keen on us a few years ago. That was when the place was mostly jazz and skiffle.

"We used to go on and play wild rockers like 'Whole Lotta Shakin'', and they'd pass notes up to the stage telling us to cool down!

"I think 'No Other Baby' was the only country-and-western or skiffle number we knew, so we used to play it over and over again. It got so bad, they wouldn't book us!

"Nothing seemed to happen for a while. I think we broke up, then we got together with a lad named Stuart Sutcliffe. Stu left the group after one of our trips to Hamburg, because he wanted to stay in Germany, where I regret to say, he has since died."

He lit a cigarette. "I remember we had an audition for Larry Parnes once, and he sent us to do a date in Scotland. We must have had about eight drumkits by then, because every time we had a new drummer he seemed to leave us with his gear! Paul even did a bit of drumming himself.

"After that we went to Germany. That must have been in August 1960. I remember it well because the German police discovered I was under age to be working in the clubs, and they had me sent back home to Liverpool.

"A few days later the rest of the lads came home, but we didn't get together right away. In fact, it was a little while before we decided it was about time we got some work – and we owe it to Bob Wooler.

"I think Bob must know more about the

MARK AND COLLEEN HAYWARD/REDFERNS

Primal screamers: The Beatles play the Majestic Theatre, Birkenhead, April 1963

Liverpool scene than anybody. He's now compere at the Cavern.

"Bob got us this job at a dance hall just after Christmas, 1960. It was funny – we'd spent so much of our time in Germany, nobody knew us. We were billed as 'Direct from Hamburg', and everybody thought we were German! One girl came up to me and said, 'Don't you speak good English?'"

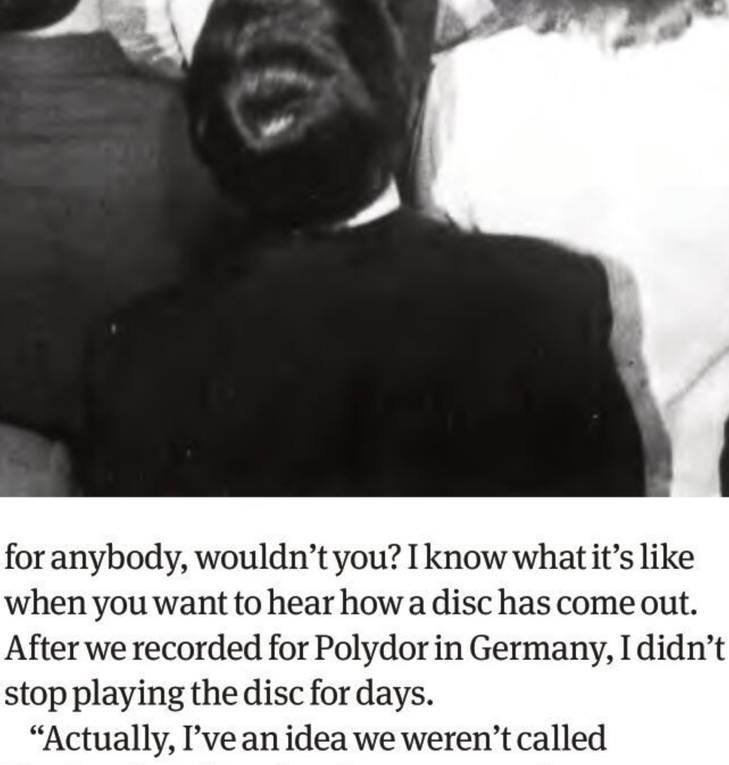
Someone brought George another Pepsi-Cola and he paused to welcome Bob Wooler, who'd just come into the room.

Said Bob: "I'll tell you this about George – he's completely unaffected by stardom. I've written the lyrics to a number Billy J Kramer has recorded for future release on an LP. I didn't think I'd hear the finished version for some time, but George got hold of a copy and drove four miles to let me hear it.

"That may not seem much, but what struck me was the way he went right out of his way to be helpful."

George looked modest. "Well, you'd do the same for anybody, wouldn't you? I know what it's like when you want to hear how a disc has come out. After we recorded for Polydor in Germany, I didn't stop playing the disc for days.

"Actually, I've an idea we weren't called The Beatles when that German record was released. It was untranslatable, so on the label they called us The Beat Brothers.



"Do I have any hobbies? Well, I'm lucky in that I actually like music. I'm always playing around with my guitar offstage. Or putting on records.

"Just lately we've all been having a bit of fun with a tape-recorder. John wrote down the words – you can't really call it poetry or verse – and then I read it out on the tape. It's weird stuff. I'm not sure that anybody else would know what it's all about!

"We had a gear time with the recorder a few weeks ago, when we were with Gerry & The Pacemakers at Weston-super-Mare. We were in a car and Gerry was wearing a big hat and dark glasses, asking people the way to the local golf course. We got some dead funny replies. Just like *Candid Camera* it was, only in sound!

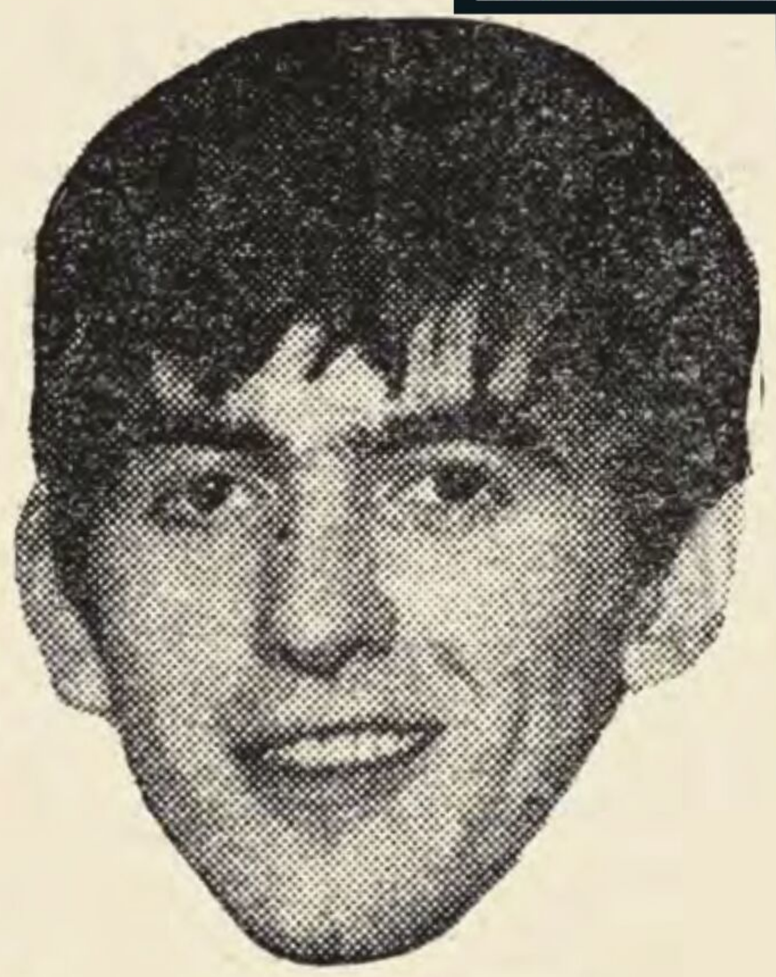
"Then there's this idea we've got for a go-carting track. I was talking to Adam Faith a few weeks ago, and I think he's as keen on it as we are. We might be able to get a few more people interested."

George discounts theories that The Beatles might split up in years to come. ➤

JOHN PRATT/KEYSTONE FEATURES/GETTY IMAGES

MM 15|02|63

Lifelines of the BEATLES



GEORGE

Real name :	George Harrison
Birth date :	February 25, 1942.
Birthplace :	Liverpool.
Height :	5 ft. 11 in.
Weight :	10 st. 2 lb.
Colour of eyes :	Dark brown.
Colour of hair :	Brown.
Brothers, sisters :	Louise, Peter and Harry.
Instruments played :	Guitar, piano, drums.
Educated :	Liverpool Institute High School.
Age entered show business :	17.
Former occupation:	Student.
Hobbies :	Driving, records, girls.
Favourite singers :	Little Richard, Eartha Kitt.
Favourite actors :	Vic Morrow.
Favourite actresses:	Brigitte Bardot.
Favourite foods :	Lamb chops, chips.
Favourite drinks :	Tea.
Favourite clothes :	Anything.
Favourite band :	Duane Eddy group.
Favourite instrumentalist :	Chet Atkins.
Favourite composers :	None special.
Likes :	Driving.
Dislikes :	Haircuts.
Tastes in music :	Spanish guitar, c-and-w.
Personal ambitions :	To design a guitar.
Professional ambition :	To fulfil all group's hopes.

"We've known each other for six or seven years. If we couldn't get along, we'd know it by now all right. I know I'm very happy. Ringo says I'm an irritable so-and-so, but I think he's just having me on.

"I think the future holds a lot. I'd like to invest money and perhaps branch out in different show-business ventures. I suppose I've been a bit lucky when it comes to songwriting. I haven't bothered in the same way as John and Paul, though I'd like to have a stab at it sooner or later.

"I did actually write one number, if you could call it 'writing'. It was in Hamburg just about the time The Shadows' 'Apache' came out. Somebody asked John and myself how the tune went, and we tried to demonstrate.

"The result wasn't a bit like 'Apache', but we liked it and we used it in the act for a while. We even called it 'Cry For A Shadow'. Now it's on our Polydor EP."

George Harrison doesn't claim to be much of a get-up-and-go Beatle. "I like parties and a bit of fun like anyone else," he says, "but there's nothing better, for me, than a bit of peace and quiet. Sitting round a big fire with your slippers on and watching the telly. That's the life!"

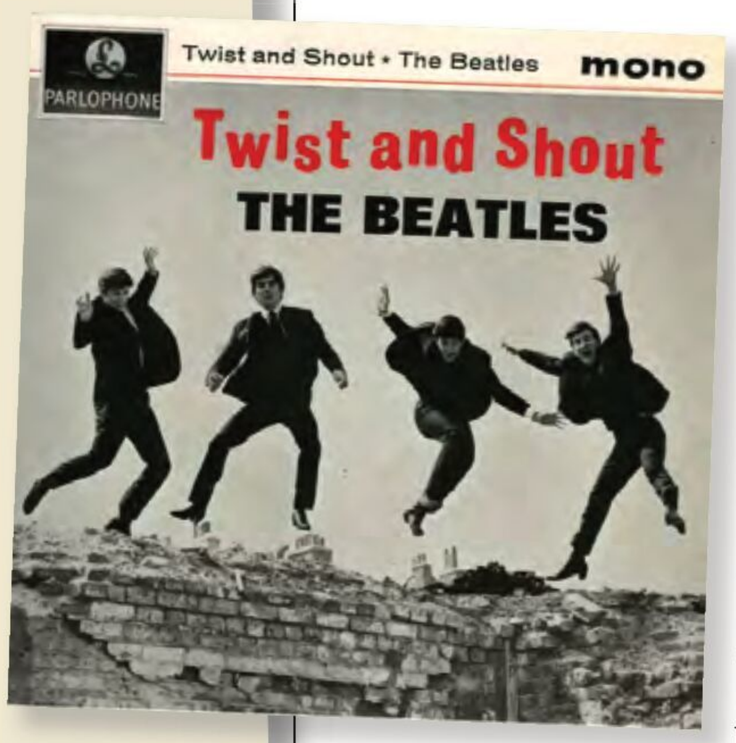
ALAN SMITH

NME 13|09|63

NEXT week Beatle George Harrison flies to America for the holiday of a lifetime – but after an aircraft incident last week that might have robbed Britain of one of its top foursomes, the forthcoming trip over the Atlantic is causing him some concerns.

Backstage in a theatre at Luton at the weekend, George told me of the hair-raising incident which, for a few fleeting moments, he thought had put paid to much more than his singing career!

"We were taking off from Liverpool for one of our frequent flights across the country, when the plane suddenly came to a halt just as it was about to leave the ground. That gave us the jitters, but what was to follow will make me sympathise with Elvis Presley's fear of flying for the rest of my days!



"As we made the proper takeoff, the emergency exit by which I was sitting suddenly flew open! I had heard stories about people being sucked out of aircraft, and I don't mind admitting I was pretty terrified. Our manager, Brian Epstein, who was sitting next to me, grabbed my arm and I yelled out for the air hostess, but she thought that I was fooling as we often do since we fly in this plane so frequently."

The exit was finally sealed, but for George, who frequently had nightmares as a child, the experience was one he won't forget in a hurry. Certainly not by the day next week when he

Polished performance: The Beatles appear at the ABC Cinema in Manchester, November 20, 1963

"It'll be a change to be in England for once after America and all that"

GEORGE HARRISON

steps, with his elder brother Peter, into a jet airliner that will carry then to the US.

After engagements this weekend, all four Beatles start a 16-day holiday and George will be visiting in St Louis a sister he hasn't seen for nine years.

"It's a trip I've always dreamed of, and you can bet I'll make the most of it," he told me, though hastening to add, "Mind you, I wouldn't like to stay there."

John Lennon will start his holiday in Paris, the city where he first found The Beatles' haircut during a working visit last year.

"I intend to ramble through Europe just like we used to through England. Only difference is that this time I'll be able to pay my way," John told me.

Nursing a heavily bandaged hand that he burned on the radiator of his car, Ringo Starr told me of his vacation plans with Paul McCartney. They will be heading for the hot sunshine of Greece, taking in Athens on a trip that's "partly to look at the gear we've read about in the history books and partly because we need a suntan after working under arc lights for so long", said Ringo.

Incidentally, Paul will be taking a cine-camera with him. It's the latest craze for himself and George. Paul told me: "Happily we've spent a lot of this year in front of television cameras. We've only just finished a film documentary for the BBC.

"Now George and I have got a yen to be on the other side of the camera, and we aim to take movies of our fans in various parts of the country – when they're looking, of course!"

So when The Beatles get back from holiday, make sure your hair is tidy if you're in a part of the country they're visiting – you may very well end up on a piece of film that's for the group's viewing only.

CHRIS HUTCHINS

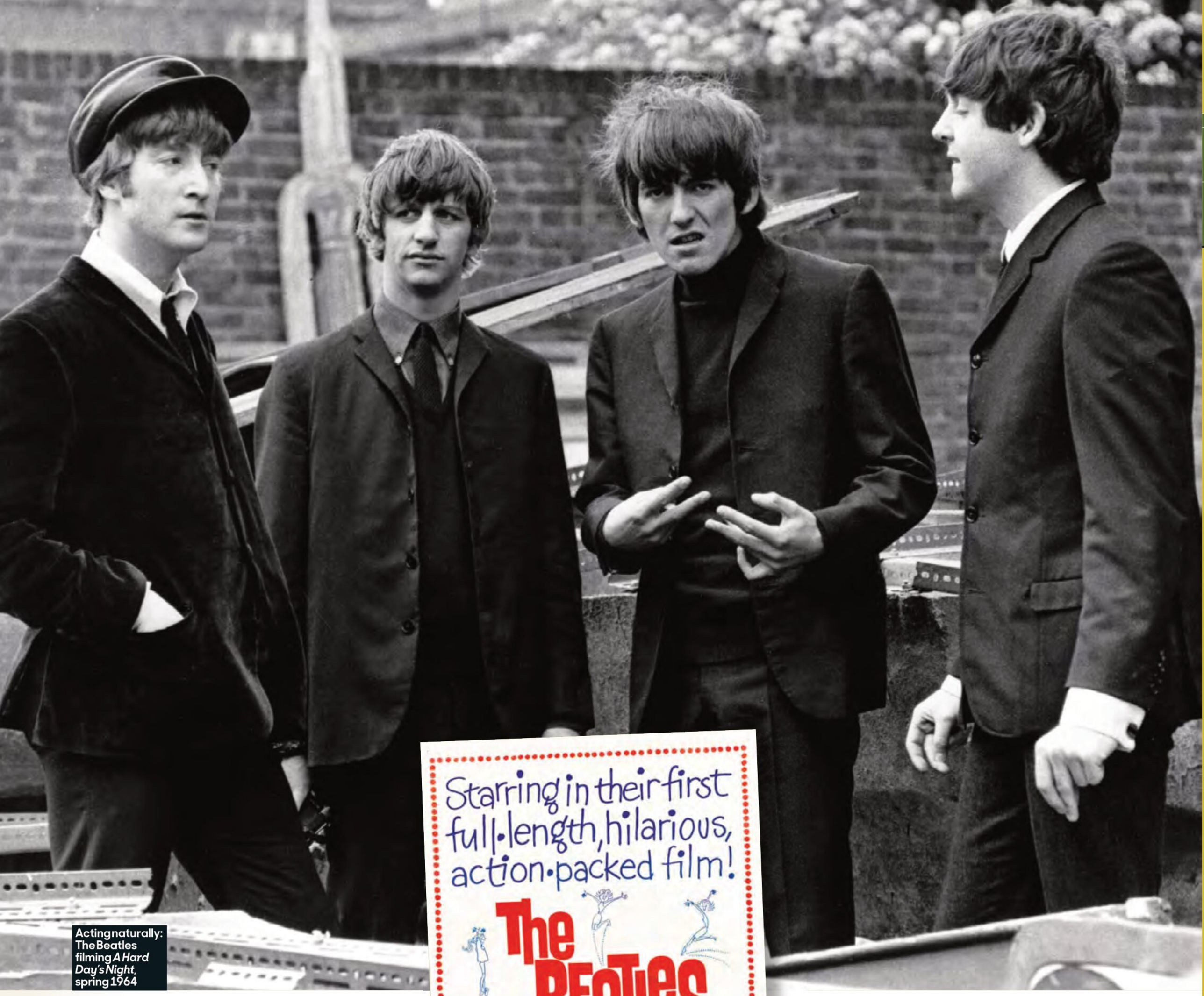
MM 10|10|64

PSYCHIATRISTS will scratch their greying hairs. Parents will scold their children. And hundreds of thousands of Beatles fans will shriek Britain silly for three weeks starting tomorrow (Friday).

This is when The Beatles start a nationwide tour of Britain at Bradford. It's a sell-out all the way, guaranteeing unbelievable, passionate scenes. Records will be broken. So will hearts. Hefty, red-faced policemen will perspire freely.

On stage and in the dressing rooms, The Beatles will be raving it up. But before it starts, how do they feel about the task, the strain of keeping up the parade of smiles and standards? Surveying the prospects this week, George Harrison said: "We're all looking forward to this tour for a ➤

EVERETT COLLECTION INC/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



Acting naturally: The Beatles filming *A Hard Day's Night*, spring 1964

special reason: it'll be a change to be in England for once after America and all that. It seems we haven't done this country for ages."

Did he think that with the size of the British audiences smaller than American, it might come as an anticlimax?

Harrison, speaking during a break in the telerecording of Jack Good's US TV show *Shindig!* in London's suburbs, replied: "We have never been worried about scenes and anything like that, and we haven't ever had anything to worry about regarding getting to and from theatres with safety.

"We are used to that sort of difficulty now. When you look back to American trips, and audiences and crowds of between 20 and 30 thousand at a time, Britain is going to seem a bit different. I don't think this one will be as frantic as the last one. But it ought to be a good show, and we're particularly glad to have people like Sounds Inc and Mary Wells with us this time."

What will be The Beatles' song programme for the tour?

"Funnily enough," George answered, "we haven't yet sat down to plan it, although we've had odd conversations on the lines of 'Oh, we ought to do so-and-so on the tour'. This week we want to get down to rehearsals and map it out properly. We will probably do a couple from the film – 'If I Fell' and maybe 'I Should Have Known Better'.

"Here's one interesting thing people might like to hear about: John has one of those things that fits around his neck now, making it possible for him to blow harmonica and play rhythm guitar at the same time. So he may be doing that – in fact I hope he does – and even though he does look a bit odd, it ought to be quite a sight!

"Other numbers," George continued, "will probably be 'A Hard Day's Night', and of course the songs that everybody wants to hear. The usuals and a few new ones, maybe, when we've discussed it fully."

Beatles screamers are often accused of not being music fans at all. They make such a noise that, from the audience as well as from the stage, it is scarcely possible to discern what song is being sung. Do The Beatles resent this? Would they prefer quieter fans? After all, John Lennon has been known to yell, "Shurrup!"

Said George: "We like screams. We have never really minded screamers. Because they do pay the money, don't they? And the fans who come have probably got the records anyway, and all they want to do is see us. If they didn't scream, they wouldn't enjoy it, and nor would we.

"So scream louder and louder as far as we're concerned!"

What did he have to say about theories that screaming and excitement was morally bad and dangerous? "Oh I thought psychiatrists gave up trying to work it all out a long time ago. They tried to work it all out in America. We think psychiatrists should see a psychiatrist. I think there's nothing wrong with screaming at all. I'd like to make a comparison – consider the same thing with football matches where you get soft men shouting and punching each other. Especially if it's a Cup match. I don't see any difference between that sort of behaviour and ➤

EVERETT COLLECTION INC/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

"That's enough of that, thank you..."

WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT'S BEING PLAYED, GEORGE HARRISON LENDS HIS CRITICAL EAR TO THE NEW 45s FOR THE BENEFIT OF *MELODY MAKER*

EARL ROYCE AND THE OLYMPICS
Que Sera
COLUMBIA

"Oh yeah – that's 'Que Sera', by a new group George Martin has recorded. The lead voice is great but the only thing about it I don't like is that the arrangement's exactly the same as the original, by the High Keys. But as very few people will have heard the original, I suppose it's OK. This is a good record. It stands a chance. I prefer the trumpets in the original to this sound, but generally, it's a nice-sounding record and George Martin should be proud of them."

FRANÇOISE HARDY
Et Même **PYE**

"It's a French one. They're trying for a Phil Spector sound. Apart from the voice, which I like because it's good and smoochy, it's an American-sounding record, and few Continental-sung songs mean all that much here. Quite nice, I imagine, if you're stoned out of your head at about 4am and you're fed up of noisy songs! It's a 'Da Doo Ron Ron' sound, and Andrew Oldham should be proud of her."

THE VISCOUNTS
Sally **COLUMBIA**

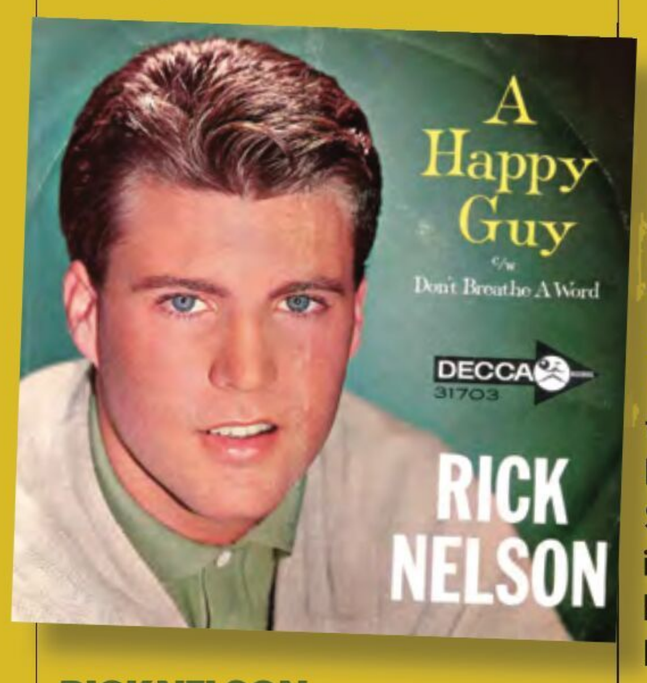
"This is a British group, isn't it? Well, I doubt if it will do anything. I never liked it – even by Gracie Fields, and she was my granny. The sort of songs The Bachelors should have done. I don't like it and would you please take it off?"

LITTLE RICHARD
Blueberry Hill
FONTANA

"Richard's 'Blueberry Hill' – a knockout, but it won't do a thing, unfortunately. I can imagine him rushing around the stage smashing the mic to pieces while he's singing. I love the 'Whoo' part – that's probably where we pinched our 'Whoo' thing from on stage. Well, it's nice to know he's still doing rockers like these. I like it. But as 'Bama Lama' didn't do much, and that was better than this, I can't see this doing much better than the bottom half of the Pop 50."

AL MARTINO
We Could
COLUMBIA

"I have no idea who it is. I don't like this sort of song. It sounds like someone trying to do a Dean Martin bit, but I don't like it. No, that's enough of that, thank you."



RICK NELSON
A Happy Guy
BRUNSWICK

"Rick Nelson. I've always liked the sound of his records, and the backings are good. It has that usual easy-moving beat. He hasn't had many hits in Britain, has he? Can't see this being a big hit. Bottom of the 50, maybe. It's quite nice. His guitarist is James Burton and he's marvellous on every Ricky Nelson record. This one has a good bass and good intro, but nothing else happens. No, it can't be a hit. The song's nothing."

THE PATHFINDERS
I Love You Caroline
DECCA

"Don't know who it is, but it definitely sounds British. Isn't it that radio station signature tune? I don't like it, and I particularly don't like that voice. It should get a lot of plays on Radio Caroline, but it won't be a hit and you can take it off."

LONG AND THE SHORT
Choc Ice **DECCA**

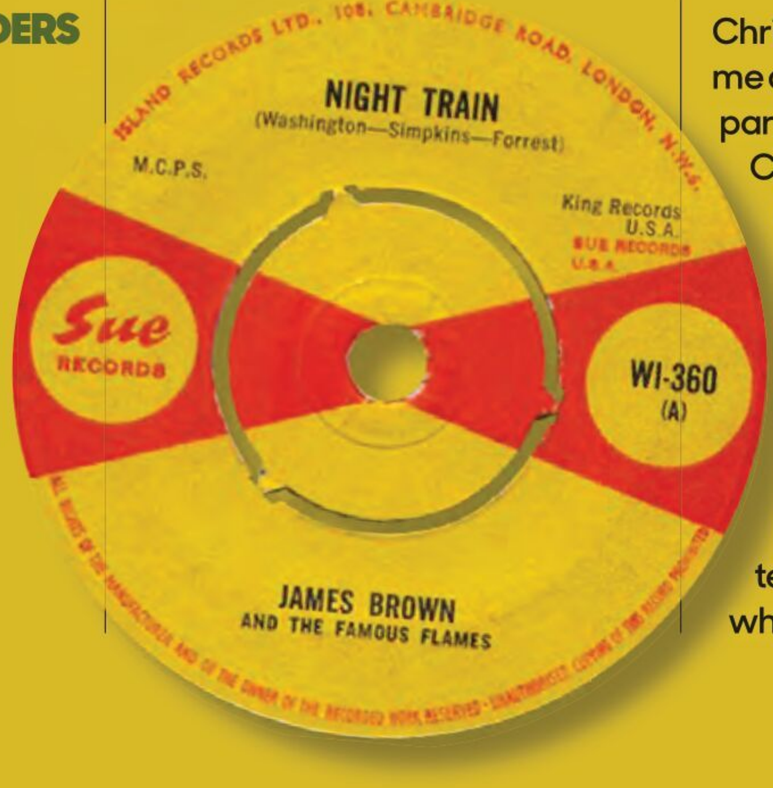
"Awful song. British, I'd say. No idea who it is. Good rhythm sound but an awful song and it doesn't stand a chance. Mind you, we thought that about 'Have I The Right?' and so did a lot of other people. Thank you – enough of that record."

KAROL KEYES
You Beat Me To The Punch
FONTANA

"It slays me how all these things keep coming out with that beat. This is 'You Beat Me To The Punch', the old Mary Wells number, and whoever's singing it has an awful voice for this sort of music. She's singing a soul song, and she hasn't got any soul. The voice is all right but not for this sort of material. She'd be better off with Kathy Kirby or Susan Maughan material. This is very weak to anybody who knows the Mary Wells version. I don't want to put this girl off singing this stuff if she wants to, but she shouldn't have been allowed to record this sort of material. It doesn't suit her."

JAMES BROWN & THE FAMOUS FLAMES
Night Train **SUE**

"Is it supposed to be a vocal or instrumental? It's OK but it won't do a thing over here. If he'd sing something more I might stand a better chance of guessing who he is. It's all right, I suppose, but I've heard better versions of 'Night Train'. If he's a singer, he wants to speak up a bit! Wait a second. I like what voice there is – could it be James Brown? His voice is a gas. Why doesn't he use it here? I think he's gear, and I loved his single 'Out Of Sight'. But this isn't a hit. Sorry."



PAT WAYNE & THE BEACH-COMBERS
Brand New Man
COLUMBIA

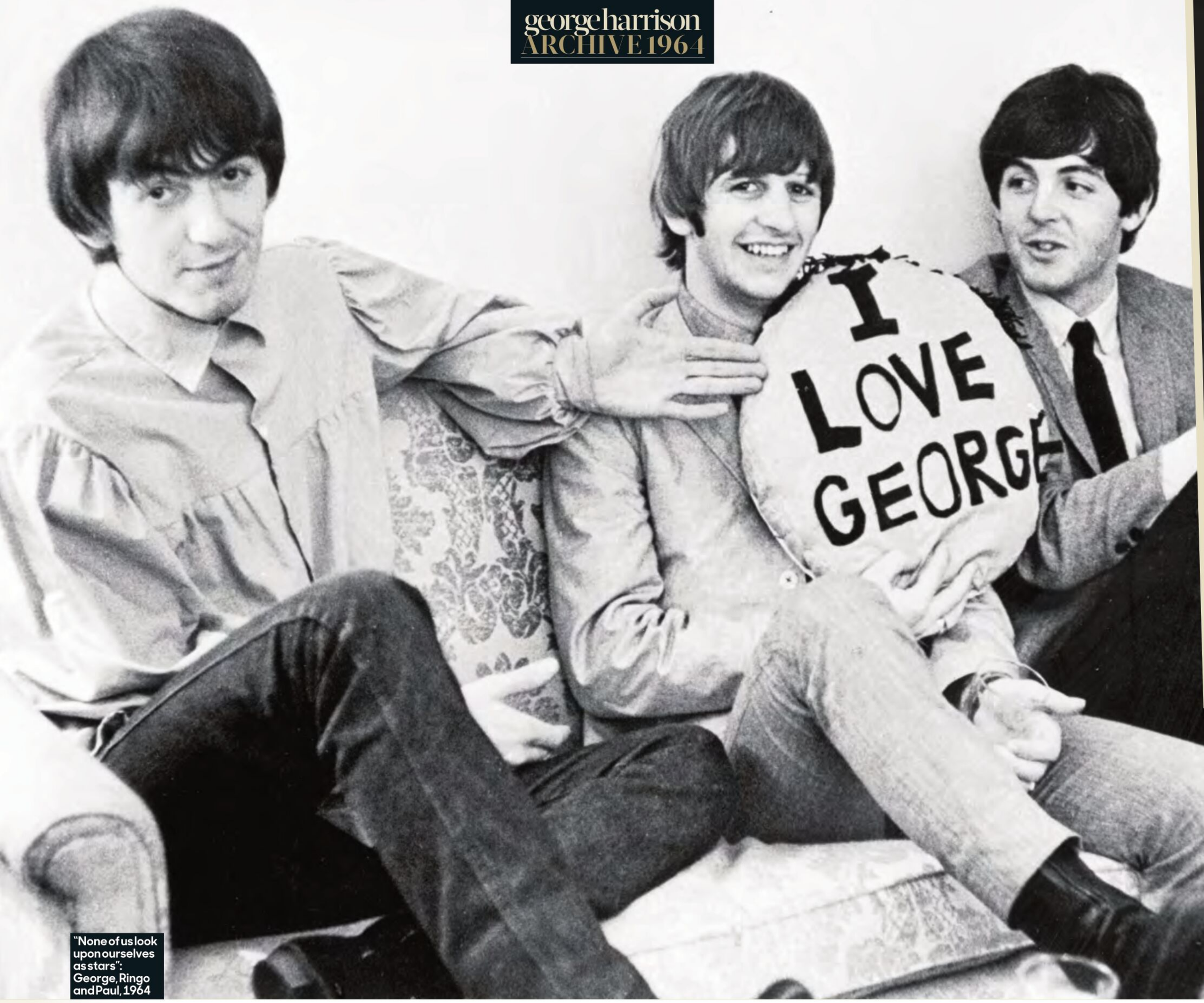
"British. I've heard better versions of this as well. I've definitely heard this song before, and from what I can remember it was much better. I can't stand this sort of British group sound. Sounds to me like they've borrowed the end of our 'Please Please Me', like so many records do."

BETTY EVERETT
Getting Mighty Crowded **FONTANA**

"The saxes are doing a Major Lance thing like on 'Monkey Time' and 'Hey Little Girl'. If it isn't a Motown, it's an Impressions-type of song. It's nice, but I don't know who it is."

BABY DOLLS
The Bell That Couldn't Jingle
COLUMBIA

"I can't stand Christmas records, either. It took me all my time last year to like parts of that Phil Spector Christmas LP. I suppose people might buy this for their babies to smash at parties. It's about time people realised they don't get a hit at Christmas just because they're doing a Christmas song. I don't know who this is, but it isn't Mick Jagger. The recording is technically awful. I dislike the whole thing. You can take it off."



"None of us look upon ourselves as stars": George, Ringo and Paul, 1964

our fans, except that our fans are naturally younger and behave in a different way. Is that wrong? I don't think so."

George switched to music and talked of The Beatles' recording plans.

"We're just recording things as fast as John and Paul write them," he reported. "We have been dissatisfied with our last three LPs. We thought they were OK at the time, but on hearing them over and over we noticed where we could get things better here and there.

"So this time we want to take it easy with the LP. We've done about six tracks already. We're not recording anything specially for the next single just yet – we're just recording a lot of numbers and then we'll see what happens, what they sound like."

Asked about the recurring suggestion that The Rolling Stones were challenging The Beatles for popularity honours, George was terse and pertinent.

"As far as I can remember," he said, "it was Brian Poole with 'Twist And Shout' who first became The Beatles' challenger, as people call them. Then it was Dave Clark, I think. Now it's the Stones. The whole thing's getting ridiculous. New groups get to No 1 in the chart and so people say The Beatles are slipping – oh dear, oh dear, and all that. There are bound to be other groups who get very popular, and it's a good thing. But I reckon the way it's played up is sometimes nothing but a farce.

"The Stones are very popular. I know that. But our records have sold a lot. Our film's doing well. So really, who cares? You know, our record sales are now almost 100 million round the world. Can't be bad. I doubt if the Stones have sold two million. Have they? Whatever it is, we know we're doing all right.

"I believe the tickets have gone OK for this tour, too," said George, in one of the masterly understatements of 1964.

Beatlemania continues. Contrary to what the Stones sing, it is not all over now. ***RAY COLEMAN***

EXPRESS/EXPRESS/GETTY IMAGES

"Donegan was my great hero, then Buddy Holly and Eddie Cochran"

GEORGE HARRISON

MM 07|11|64

GEORGE HARRISON is the reluctant Beatle. He did not expect fame. When it came, he was bewildered. He is the most affable of the four – instantly friendly, talkative, and frank. Like John Lennon, George detests the star treatment.

When dressing-room visitors are about to leave through politeness as The Beatles undress, it is often Harrison who says something like: "Stay where you are – unless you mind seeing four naked men. You don't mind that, do you?" The slow smile, the dry wit and the pure down-to-earth behaviour of The Beatles' lead guitarist conceals an agile, clear-thinking mind. George uses this to work out what is happening with the money. He is deeply interested in cash.

Some say his image has not taken off in the "solo star" sense as it has for, say, Paul or Ringo. The truth is that quietly, and with less fuss and adulation than has surrounded the other three. Harrison has built up a vast personal following. Adults seem to gravitate to the "I like George the best" bit because they think he is the quietest and most "respectable" Beatle.

Paul's dead jealous: fun with fans at the Gaumont Cinema, Doncaster, December 10, 1963

Young girls want to mother him.

He is probably the most conscientious autograph-signer of them all. He believes in fair play for the fans: if he hears of someone who has waited at the stage door for an autograph or a glimpse of their heroes, he goes to enormous lengths to ensure they are rewarded. He is starkly honest. George has two major articles to show for his success: an E-Type Jaguar which he loves, and a house on Merseyside which he bought his father when everything started to happen. He does things quietly except when he is annoyed. Then he does things loudly – but loudly.

"That boy George – he's very quiet, but he's cute," said Mary Wells early on in the tour before she got to know The Beatles. "Is he all right?" Harrison is indeed "all right", and later he contemplated a gruesome-looking steak and chips in The Beatles' dressing room as he answered questions.

How did he feel today, putting the success story into perspective?

"I dunno. I don't feel any difference now from when it all started," came the genuine reply. "See – although success is good and I enjoy everything it means, I feel exactly the same about the group, the music and the audiences – in fact, life generally – as I did when we were sweating away in Hamburg.

"Apart from the obvious differences, of course – like money. But let's face it: physically I'm the same bloke! I'll say this much: I feel odd when people look up and point at me on stage, like they do with all of us now. It seems odd to think we are at the centre of attraction because – you know, we've gone through so much to get where we are. None of us look upon ourselves as stars. It's the other people who say we're the stars. We don't.

"All we wanted when we started was to have hits and top bills and go on TV and make money. I never thought this sort of situation would ever develop – like everybody knows who we are and all that. It all happened so quickly, though, that I didn't get any chance to turn back – none of us did. It's a good job we all had the right sort of mentality to hold ourselves from going mad, with everything going on round us like it did.

"But it's been great – what else can you say about this sort of thing when it happens to you? It's like winning the pools!"

George was talking in the past tense. Asked how he saw The Beatles' future, he replied: "We are going to make two more films at least under this present contract – one starts next February, you know. I'd like to make more films, and I think we're all agreed we want to carry on making records. Personally, I'm a bit fed up of touring. Not so much in England, but particularly in America, for instance.

"I feel sure we wouldn't do another tour of the States for as long as five weeks ever again. It's so exhausting and not really that satisfying for us like that. And that's about it for as far as I can see – films, records and a bit of TV.

"But I'd like to get some little business going on the side," continued George, exposing his business brain. "Something completely away from this business that'd give me another interest. I haven't much in mind, though.

"People think we have worked out everything perfectly – been everywhere and done everything at exactly the right time to get ourselves where we are. That's ridiculous. It's been luck most of the way.

"For instance, before we made our first film, we were offered some scripts and told that this was exactly the right time when we should be making one. But none of us liked the films we were offered at first, so we didn't make one until we did. See, we were determined never to make a film where we'd be stuck in for five minutes on these rubbishy film spectaculars with millions of names – they're awful. That sort of thing would either be damaging or a complete waste of time. Probably both."

Paul, changing into stage gear: "That's it, George. You tell 'im. I can see the headline now – BEATLE HITS OUT AT FILM PHONEYS! That's it, George! You tell 'im..."

"OK," George went on. "Let's go. From the beginning we've always met the right people. Before we got wise to the business, we heard and experienced so many sharks who were raking in the loot and paying the groups nothing. It's still going on, but the whole scene's become so big that more people are wise to it now. But this is where I can give an example of our luck: we were lucky to meet Brian Epstein.

"Then we got George Martin – lucky again, because there are so many bad A&R men. Same with the film. It made all the difference to work with Walter Shenson and Dick Lester. They have the perfect natures for us."

On to music. George talked about other guitarists. "Jim Sullivan – he's a knockout. I wish he'd show me how he does it," said the Beatle. "I've never met him and I'd like to one day. Then, the guitarist in the Remo Four, Colin Manley, is good. He used to go to school with Paul and me, and he's always been great.

"No, not reading music's no handicap. It might be if I played with, say, Joe Loss."

He said his first guitar cost him £2 10s. "I was 14 – that was in Slim Whitman days," Harrison recalled. "Donegan was my great hero. Then came Buddy Holly and Eddie Cochran."

What was his advice to budding beat-group guitarists? "Practice is the most important thing," he replied. "I don't do it as much as I used to, mainly becasause we're on stage so much that when you come off you want to forget it and relax. But I still have a good, solid practice occasionally."

"I'd like to make that point strongly about our luck," said George as he changed clothes ready for the stage. "We've always dealt on this level with people. I'll tell you this much about the people who have given us phoney deals," he said. "We'll never forget them."

And coming from George Harrison, the business Beatle with an uncanny instinct, you get the impression he means it. ॐ

"People think we've worked everything out, but it's been luck most of the way"

GEORGE HARRISON

MARK AND COLLEEN HAYWARD/GETTY IMAGES

"We're on the way out, John and me. George is moving in"

1965, and the superstar Beatles prepare the music for their second film soundtrack. Ray Coleman sits in on a session at Abbey Road, and while John Lennon is the dominant personality in the room, it's clear that he and Paul McCartney are being quietly challenged by a new creative force. "George has written *two*? He'll have to go..." A little later in the year, level-headed Harrison is keen to know the destination of The Beatles' riches. "It's a complicated business, money," he tells Ray Coleman

MELODY MAKER 27|02|65

FEW pop stars think beyond their latest hit. But John Lennon does. He is the mastermind of The Beatles. A born cynic with built-in scepticism when things appear to be going smoothly. There is an indestructible bond of friendship and ambition between John, Paul, George and Ringo. But 24-year-old Lennon is the deepest thinker, the most pungent wit, and the Beatle with plans for the future. He is a millionaire. But you would never know it. He carries little money, is always scrounging cigarettes, and uses matches instead of a flashy lighter. He is more interested in poking fun or administering the verbal knife than in physical flamboyance. But above all, John is deeply interested in his music.

Ironically, it was at last week's Beatles recording session in London that Lennon spoke of his plans to become an independent recording manager. While Paul played the electric piano during a lull and George and Ringo danced to a playback of a song The Beatles had taped, John sat and answered questions about the future of The Beatles and his personal plans.

Some say The Beatles have now "done everything" to such a degree that there is nothing left. Was the day approaching when The Beatles would no longer be pop stars? With their second film starting this week and a third already titled, would they now be abdicating from the hit parade?

John's reply was immediate. "No. We'll still be pop stars as long as we continue making records. And we intend to go on doing that."

Did they treat filming as a serious business and an important new field, or did they regard it as an excursion into light relief?

"Yes, we regard filming as a bit of a giggle. We regard recording as a bit of a giggle as well. So we're film stars and pop stars. We hope."

"People talk a lot of rubbish about us. We have no plans to break up"
JOHN LENNON

What about the rumours that they have reached the end of the line? And talk that they might soon disband to retire gracefully in a blaze of glory?

"I don't see why these things are even being considered," said Lennon without hesitation. "The supposition that, just because we've done well, we might as well pack it in. The much more sensible thing for anybody to say is that we'll never pack it in completely because we've made so much money and we still are making it.

"People talk a load of rubbish about us. We have no plans to break up. We might be interested in doing other things as well as making records and films, but The Beatles will still be The Beatles."

Exactly what did Lennon have in mind for his future?

"Well, I'll tell you exactly what I'm involved in right now," he replied. "I'm definitely going to do some A&R work. I want to be an independent record producer. I'd like to find someone as good as, say, Tom Jones, and record them. Probably Paul and me, actually, working together. Until now, there's never been time. But there might be now.

"I was going to have a recording studio built ➤

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

They feel fine: John, Ringo, Paul and George pose for a portrait in the studio, 1965

at my house. But I gave up the idea. I've decided I couldn't work it. Good God, I can't even work a bloody tape recorder, so I can't see myself doing the big equipment bit!"

So how did the untechnical Lennon plan to make records?

"Well I'm getting this shed built at the back of the house. That's for practice. I'll discover people and then hire a studio to record them. It won't be for some time yet, so I don't want hundreds of people imagining that I'm walking around with a big cigar and open to offers!"

What sort of artists did he have in mind? Mainly groups, or chiefly soloists?

"I've been thinking about this. I reckon there's nobody in the world equivalent in popularity, I suppose you'd say, to Presley or us. I mean a girl singer. That's who I'd really like to discover. Someone with the looks of Bardot and the voice of Dionne Warwick. Do I like Dionne that much? Well her voice is OK. I'm not exactly crazy about her, but that's the sort of combination I'm thinking of. A big sex symbol. A girl who looks great and sings wild. She's got to be SOMEWHERE. There's never been anybody like that as I can remember. The sort of girl I'd be interested in for this would be someone with such a voice that all the fellas would queue up to see what she looks like.

"And when they see what she looks like..."

If John was so interested in building a big solo star, did it mean he thought the group scene might be quietening?

"All I can see in that way," Lennon answered, "is that this year the record companies won't be signing up all the crappy groups like they did last year. There was a time when the companies signed up anybody who made a noise like four men with guitars. They got lumbered and they deserved to get lumbered."

Did John think this had injured the British music scene generally?

"I don't know," said the Beatle. "And I couldn't care less. It's just true – they signed up rubbish and when they didn't all get hits they started running. Can't blame 'em, but they should have been more sensible."

George wandered over: "Who would have been more sensible, John?"

Lennon: "What do you want?"

Harrison: "What are you talking about?"

Lennon: "Mind your own bloody business. Got a ciggie?"

John helped himself to a cigarette from George's top pocket before Harrison could reply.

Exit George.

John went on to declare that he enjoyed recording sessions more than anything else connected with being a Beatle.

Asked if he got as much kick from making records now, he said: "Yeah – much more, really."

"When we started recording, I didn't know much about it – what to do, what sounds to expect at the end. But now we all know little bits about it, it makes it much more interesting. I get a great kick from recording. You never know what's going to happen."

Did the group ever consider breaking away from their accepted formula, musically and trying something completely new?

"If that happened, it would happen accidentally," said John. "We've never had policies or anything. We're just a group."

How strong was his personal enthusiasm for Bob Dylan material and Dylan interpretations?

"I just started doing it because it was different and I like it. I'm not going over to it permanently – just now and then, when I feel like it. I just felt like going that way a bit, y'know. If I'd not heard Dylan, it might have been that I'd have written stuff and sung it like Dominic Behan, or somebody like that."

Finally, how did John see the role of The Beatles either as a group or individually in five years' time? "Don't know. Who can answer that? Even if we retired we wouldn't split from each other altogether.

"Anyway, who wants to talk about retiring now? It would be a drag. None of us could stick it."

Ringo Starr and Maureen Cox tie the knot at Caxton Hall registry office, Westminster February 11, 1965: (l–r) the bride's father Joseph Cox, Cynthia Lennon, Mrs Cox, John, George, Ringo and Maureen, Brian Epstein, Ringo's parents

"I get a great kick from recording. You never know what's going to happen"

JOHN LENNON

THE BEATLES had just finished a recording and George Harrison was passing around cigarettes. Ringo ran across the floor of Studio Two and leapt up the stairs to talk to recording manager George Martin. The time was right for the other three to speak privately.

John: "Look, what ARE we going to get him as a bloody wedding present? Let's get it sorted out right now."

Paul: "I don't know what you're worried about, I've brought him back something from Tunisia."

John: "What?"

Paul: "A silver apple – nice, Arabic thing. Very unusual."

George: "What's your game then? You're sucking up to Ringo a bit, aren't you?"

John: "What are you after, Paul – a job in Ringo's group when we give him the push? I reckon somebody should go out tomorrow and buy him and Maureen a bloody big gold clock. The biggest gold clock there is. Didn't you realise we waited for you to come back from holiday before deciding what to buy him from all of us? Listen, somebody, go out and spend a lot of money on this lovely gold clock. Then we'll send him a note saying he's out of the group!"

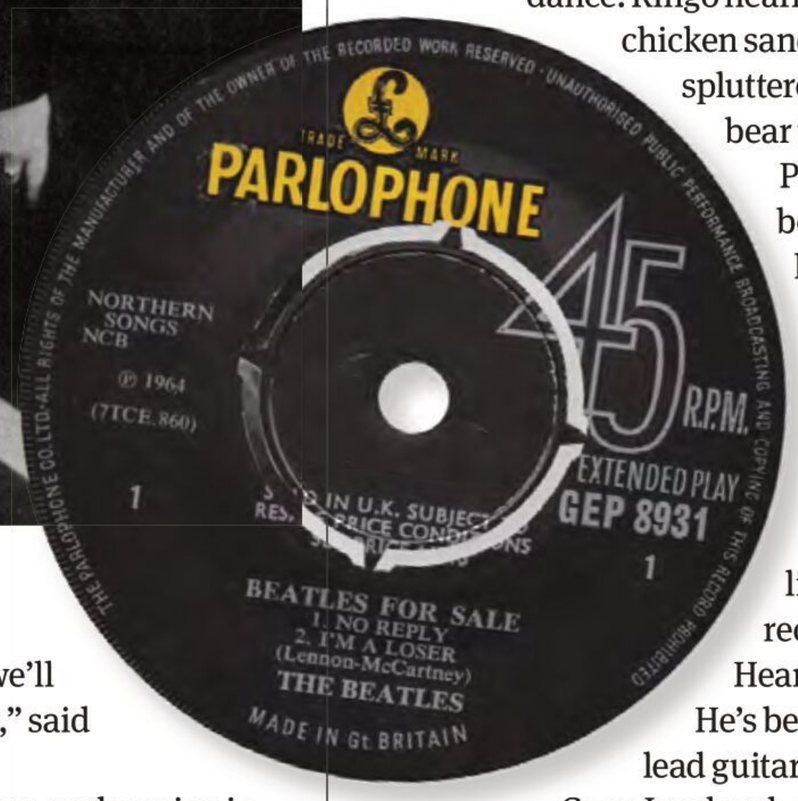
It was a fairly severe joke, but knife-edged jokes are flying all the time at a Beatles recording session. Anyone taking them seriously would wrongly think The Beatles lived on the precipice of real disaster.

The truth is that they revel in that sort of humour. A snipe is meant as a joke. Their personalities are basically so similar that they have an uncanny understanding of each other's apparent attacks.

By last Thursday night, the world's biggest pop music phenomena had spent four days at EMI's recording studios in St John's Wood, London. Their days had begun there at about 2pm and ended at about 11pm. They had recorded six new Lennon-McCartney songs and two new ones by George Harrison.

"We're on the way out, John and me," said Paul. "George is moving in. Him and Ray Davies are taking over. Folks, they are the new hit-writers!"

Some of the songs are for the Beatles film which began shooting this week in the Bahamas. Others are for stock. They might have recorded their next



single: they are not sure.

"We've just been getting plenty of stuff recorded and we'll decide what to do with it later," said John Lennon.

The atmosphere at a Beatles record session is unique. The four stars enjoy making records more than anything else. Their dedication is unswerving. But the laughter flows. Studio Two with The Beatles locked inside is the most entertaining place in the world.

John is dressed in an open-necked pink shirt with navy trousers from his suit. George wears a shabby woollen pullover, even shabbier light-blue jeans and a fawn suede jacket. Ringo is in a scarlet shirt and brown slacks. John is in a scarlet shirt and brown slacks. Paul, as immaculate as ever, is dressed almost as for dinner: black pin-striped suit, white shirt, black tie.

At 7pm, The Beatles are working up to their time for a long-deserved break and food and drink. They are just completing a song which features Ringo singing.

"I wrote it," says John. "It's the funniest thing I've ever done – listen to the words."

Ringo was singing something like: "You've gone soft in the head," and Lennon laughed. "I didn't expect anybody to want to record it," says Lennon.

Recording manager George Martin, remaining calm despite a frenzied career and a week of keeping The Beatles under control, speaks over the mic: "Right, Ringo. That sounded OK. Let's try it for taping properly now."

Ringo sings. The song has a slight Bo Diddley beat. It is difficult to hear it properly in the studio. While the red light is on Ringo is singing, Lennon's smile as he hears his words to the song is enough to harass any singer. The song ends and the red light is off.

George Martin: "OK, John and Paul played awfully but Ringo was very good." He was joking. "Right. Have your food."

A man appears with trays full of food. Paul eats pork and spinach. John grabs a pint of milk and gulps it quickly. George and Ringo grumble at road manager Neil Aspinall: "I can afford real chicken, y'know. This looks bloody horrible."

Aspinall: "But you asked for chicken sandwiches."

Ringo: "I know. But if this is the best sandwich there is, get me a whole chicken next time. I've never seen imitation chicken before tonight." He wanders back to his drums muttering and swearing.

George Harrison produces his own private recording of all the songs that they have recorded that week. He switches it on. He and Ringo start to dance. Ringo nearly chokes on his chicken sandwich and his spluttered comments don't bear thinking about.

Paul: "He's never been the same since he got married. Still, I don't think it will harm his career. It will mature him as a MAN!"

John: "Hey, listen (points to recording machine). Hear that play by Paul? He's been doing a bit of lead guitar work this week. Gear. I reckon he's moving in."

Lennon has also been featured on electric piano, as well as Paul. "Listen," says John. "On that one, George and Paul are playing the same break exactly, both playing but in different octaves."

Paul said he thought that sound was one of the best they had got on record, instrumentally. John said they were still searching for the ideal sound. "I don't know if we'll ever find it. We still haven't made the sort of sound we have to, and we don't even know what we're after."

Lennon has made another record with a Bob Dylan influence. He wrote this song. "Well, it's not pure Dylan, really," he says. "Just a folky song which I try to sing in a Dylan style. I don't want to overdo it, but I like it.

"Out of the eight songs we've done so far, I've written three, Paul's written three and George has done two. What did I say? George has written TWO? He'll have to go!"

John talks again of Dylan. "It's not easy to write songs like Bob's. 'Ere, who's seen that bloke Donovan on TV?"

George: "I have. All that bit about 'This Machine Kills' on his guitar."

John: "I think I'll have 'This Machine Smells' on mine."

George Martin reappears and the session restarts. The next two and half hours are productive. Martin is perched on a high chair and the four Beatles are around him, singing lightly and playing acoustic guitars. Martin sings a song with them. It looks rather like a Christmas singalong with Martin singing the leads.

Eventually, they do another run-through. The group tapes the instrumental backing with George forsaking his guitar and getting a comb and paper effect with a drumstick and a piece of wood.

Ringo, who isn't featured, climbs on the back of Malcolm Evans, their road manager, and they walk off to talk. The music stops.

George Martin: "Let's have one more go at the backing, then we'll record your voices separately. This time, we'll get it exactly right."

Paul: "Why – what was exactly wrong?"

Martin: "The tuning sounded wrong. And you, George, should be coming in on the second beat every time instead of every fourth beat."

Harrison: "Oh, I see."

The music starts.

Martin: "Stop. Somebody played the wrong note."

Ringo whistles and looks at Paul. The red light goes on and this time the music – a lilting song by John – comes off with no hitch.

When it's over, Lennon shouts to George: "Give us a ciggy QUICK."

During a lull, they playback their private recording again. "Have you heard George Martin's orchestral version of 'I Feel Fine'? asks John. He and Paul rave about it. "Gear."

They record the vocal by Lennon and McCartney, and later they over-record on to the original with Lennon, cigarette between lips, shaking a tambourine and Ringo playing maracas. "We want the Mexican effect," says Lennon. And so the same song went on, they must have tried it half a dozen times before being finally satisfied. And not once did they tire of retaping it completely or restarting halfway through.

At 10pm, with Paul playing electric piano, John shouted across to road manager Evans: "I like electric pianos, Mal. Buy me one tomorrow."

Ringo was by now getting changed, preparing for the *Daily Mirror* Ball at London's Albert Hall. He put on his mauve and white striped shirt and sharp black suit and looked splendid. A lady with a trayful of tea embarrassed him as he changed trousers, and he darted behind a screen. Later, he admitted he had tried to put on his trousers while still wearing boots.

John sang "I'm a Loser" to mark the event.

Paul said it had been an enjoyable night. George said he wanted to go back to Ringo's flat to get changed for the *Mirror* Ball. John said he came in his chauffeur-driven rolls. "Still scared of driving myself."

George Martin said: "See you tomorrow." Paul said yes, and could they have a go at the song he thought he'd finished writing a few hours earlier?

Harrison said America was a mad, mad country and he wondered what the scene would be like when they got there "with all the deejays going potty".

John said he couldn't care less.

The Beatles fled from Studio Two. A dozen fans outside who had waited since 7pm were rewarded with a glimpse. Inside, on the floor of the studio, lay a torn yellow envelope which had contained a wedding congratulations cable from an American fan.

Ringo spoke of that cable as he left.

"See – they still care..."

BETTMANN/GETTYIMAGES

THE BEATLES regard the success of their first film as a bit of a handicap. They know that with their second the world will be watching, ready to judge them as acting failures who rode to success with *A Hard Day's Night* mainly because of their personal magnetism. They have set themselves such a high standard that it is difficult to match it.

This week, in the Bahamas, they will approach the first shooting scenes of their second picture with concern. Ringo, the star of the first Beatles film, summed it up like this: "It's just like doing your first one – only worse. People will be watching us and expecting better. We can only do our worst – I mean best."

"It's much worse this time," said John. "Having something to live up to. I suppose if nobody likes it, that's it."

Up to last Thursday night, John, George and Ringo had read the script. Paul has not. This was because of his 11-hour return from holiday in Tunisia.

"I don't know a lot about it," said McCartney. And then, in a send-up with deadpan face: "I believe it's provisionally titled 'All Aboard for Fun'." The theme centres on a chase of Ringo's ring, with the other three Beatles among the chasers.

"I hate the idea of being the central figure again this time," said Ringo. "I didn't want to be anything special in the last one, and nor in this one. But I didn't have any say in it. I suppose if they'd been chasing a boot in the film's story, it might have been one of the others who had this part.

"But it's obvious if it's rings, they choose Ringo. Drag, in a way."

Wasn't the drummer delighted at the acclaim he received for his first screen work?

"It didn't do me any harm. When we made that, people got the idea we could act. But let's get this sorted out before the new one comes: that one film doesn't make us actors. We'll do our best again, and if it works, it's great. If it doesn't – then goodbye, Beatle people!"

The songs recorded last week – two by George Harrison, the rest by the old firm of Lennon and McCartney – are not necessarily all for the film.

"They haven't been tailored for the film or anything," said John. "They're just songs. If they fit the story and the sequences, some of them will be in. It's up to the film bosses. Not us. We've just concentrated this week on making records.

"There are a couple of obvious songs for the film, at least we think so, but nothing's been decided. We haven't written anything with the film in mind. If you do that, it restricts the storyline."

There was a roar of laughter from all four when they were asked if they could remember their parts, or if they knew the complete story. Ringo's brief sentence was unprintable. John, Paul and George looked at each other in disbelief before creasing into laughter. They should have fun in the Bahamas.

"We're not the types to say: 'We've earned plenty – that's enough'"

GEORGE HARRISON

George – he's the only one who asks the questions and finds out where it's going."

The 22-year-old lead guitarist is no financial wizard. But he spends more time than the other three thinking about investments. "I'm not really the most interested in money Beatle," said Harrison in his £20,000 Surrey house the other week. "Just the only one interested in what's happening to it. I like to know where it's going. Actually I can quite understand why the others aren't so bothered. We sit at accountants' meetings and are told we've got two per cent of this and four-and-a-half per cent of that. It's confusing and boring and like being back at school.

"Well, after a year or so of The Beatles making records and doing well, I started trying to find out where it was going. John, Paul and Ringo were equally interested. But they gave in. I didn't. It's easy to get blasé and think we're making plenty and somebody's taking care of it. But I like to know how much is coming in; where it's being put; how much I can spend. I'm no more money-mad than the others. I've just persevered and found out."

George went on to give some details.

"We all have some private investments. Believe it or not, we still haven't got a terrific amount of money in real capital. There are a lot of group investments in the name of Beatles Ltd, obviously because that's a very safe thing. There are lump sums in bank deposit accounts in the names of all four of us, I believe. There isn't a million pounds in cash or anything like that. It's mostly investments.

"Ringo has got this brick-building company and John and I have got a supermarket somewhere –

MELODY MAKER 01|05|65

GEORGE HARRISON is deeply interested in money. He likes to know precisely what is happening to The Beatles' cash. When John Lennon, Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr are asked about money, they say flatly: "Ask

MM 18|12|65

"Take it off, it's crap!"

ONE YEAR AFTER HE WAS LAST ASKED, GEORGE CONTINUES TO PULL NO PUNCHES IN HIS SINGLE REVIEWS

GEORGE HARRISON bounded into the room, grinning. "I'll sit over here so I can't see the labels," he said, plonking into a nearby chair and waiting. "Hope you've got some good 'uns. There's usually a load of crap at this time of the year. Where have you got the records from?"

George listened to all the discs and his comments were swift and sometimes scathing, but delivered with wry Beatle good humour.

MAJOR LANCE
Everybody Loves A Good Time

COLUMBIA

"Is it Major Lance? Sounds like a Curtis Mayfield song. It's either Major Lance or someone like him. It won't mean much in England, it's too mediocre. That's enough."

TOM JONES
Thunderball

DECCA

"That's got strains of John Barry's "Goldfinger" in the backing. Tom Jones. It's his new one. I don't like it. I can't see it being a big hit, although it may struggle into the bottom of the Pop 50. Is it from a film? It sounds like it, but it doesn't sound like a hit. That's enough. I prefer Tom Jones on bama-lama type numbers. He's got a big rock'n'roll voice and I prefer him doing that sort of thing."

HEDGEHOPPERS ANONYMOUS
Don't Push Me

DECCA

"It's weird. That's enough. It's those Hedgehoppers. It's crap. If I was them, I wouldn't bother trying to get out of the Air Force. The song's nothing. Is it another Jonathan King? Rubbish."

ROGER MILLER
England Swings

PHILLIPS

"Oh, it's that Roger Miller bloke. Take it off, it's crap! I don't like it at all. It is Roger Miller, isn't it? I didn't like the first hit he had, 'King Of The Road', but at least I could see why it was a hit, but this... nothing. Might be good for the country & western fans, but it's no good for the mass public. Sounds like Roy Rogers at the beginning – or Trigger!"

George outside Kinfauns, the bungalow in Esher, Surrey, that he has just acquired for £20,000, July 1964

TRINITY MIRROR / MIRRORPIX / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

I don't know where it is exactly. I don't know about Paul. But I'm sure he has got some good investments as well. That's how it's been done anyway – we've been partnered up for investments. I remember being told something about two per cent in some building society, but there are so many details to remember you just give in in the end. It's a very complicated business, money."

The Beatles are often described as millionaires.

"I wouldn't like to say I or Ringo was a millionaire in any way," George declared. "I'd say there's a fair chance John and Paul are because of all the money they've earned through Northern Songs. I think it would be very hard for all four of us to be real millionaires, anyway. Let's say for example that a big pop star in Britain is earning £2,000 a night. Then say for example The Beatles earn £4,000 a night. That solo star's got the £2,000 for himself. "With us, it's got to be split four times for a performance. That makes on paper, £1,000 a show. We just don't do that many real shows. And for us to be millionaires – every one of us – would mean The Beatles would have to gross £4 million altogether for a four-part split of the money.

"And don't forget there's a tax fee to be paid, plus Eppy's percentages. "So I'm sure Ringo and I can't be millionaires. With John and Paul it's different because of their songwriting. Hey, it sounds like I'm talking myself into being broke! It's not that bad. I know I'm okay.

"If I've got £500,000, I'm not really bothered with the other half a million. For half a million, you can buy the sort of house you want, furnish it, and the sort of car you want. The millionaire business is just status. There's a limit to how much you want to spend, in my opinion."

The Beatles meet their accountant every three months and are told what is happening to their earnings.

"I ask the most questions – that's why the others say: 'Ask George'," said Harrison. "Also I often have a private chat with the accountant about my own affairs."

Despite their fortunes, The Beatles are not obsessed by money in day-to-day activities. They do not walk around with bulging wallets. Big bills are settled through their office, and Ringo says: "I just don't find anything to spend money on if I've got it. Sometimes I haven't got any money on me at all and I have to borrow from Nell or Mal" (road managers Neil Aspinall and Malcolm Evans).

Do The Beatles ever stop to think about the comparative poverty of years ago? Do they miss not being able to walk around without being mobbed?

Says George: "We've never really thought that much about what we've done and what we've earned and how well off we are. That's one reason we've kept our heads.

"Everything still knocks us out – we're not the types to say: 'We've earned plenty – that's enough.' When we hear we've sold another million or something, we still go out of our minds thinking how great it is, and what an achievement.

"It wasn't the money in the first place. We never sat down and said we wanted to be rich and all that. The money's nice, naturally. But it was getting somewhere that mattered – pride.

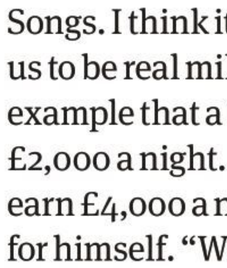
"I thought recently it would be nice to walk down a street without people saying: 'That's George Harrison.' But then you see, I probably wouldn't be in that street and able to buy from the shops there if they weren't saying that, would I?

"People say: 'Don't you miss going for a bus ride like any normal bloke?' The answer's no. What? Get some dirty old man breathing down your neck? And anyway, you can never get on buses when you want to. I used to stand in bus queues and think about how great it would be to have a car – especially when they put the chain across the bus and the conductor said: 'Sorry – full!'

"I never liked buses and I hate them now – because they get in the way of my posh car!"

VAL DOONICAN
Just To Satisfy You DECCA

"Is it Frank Ifield? It may sell well, because there's nothing nasty about it. But, personally, this style doesn't do anything for me. It could be a Top 20 hit. It's still Frank Ifield style. Val Doonican. Oh!"



THE ZOMBIES
Is This The Dream DECCA

"Zombies! I've got a soft spot for The Zombies. I've liked most of their records. I specially like the electric piano on this. It's quite a commercial song. If it gets plugged, it could get into the 20 or 30. I can't see it being big. I'd like this to be a hit. I mean, I wouldn't think it was there on false pretences. You can tell it's them, which is a good thing."

WAYNE FONTANA
It Was Easier To Hurt Her FONTANA

[*Listens attentively. Stirs tea*] "I've no idea who it is. It's not bad, you know. Good arrangement, nice backing and voice. The song's not bad, though it's not a sensation. It's good if it's English, mediocre if it's American. It is Gene McDaniels? Wayne Fontana? It's good then. It's very hard getting a good sound in England, but technically this sound is very good. May be a hit for him. Good luck to him anyway."

DUANE EDDY
House Of The Rising Sun COLPIX

"Put that intro on again! Great intro! Pity about the mouth organ. It's 'House Of The Rising Sun'. Don't like it really. It's not another Jet Harris comeback, is it? It can't be. But there's a good sound on it. Not a snowball's chance in hell of a hit. Duane Eddy? He's had his day. Instrumentals don't seem to be making it here, unless they're corny old trumpet ones."

SHAWN PHILIPS
Little Tin Soldier COLUMBIA

"It's a Donovan song, isn't it. It's not Donovan singing. It's off his new LP. Is it Shawn Philips? I like this one, though I have doubts about it being a hit. I think Shawn Philips is good. He's got a good voice and plays guitar well and the song's good. There aren't enough people to appreciate this style. It lacks something for the hit parade. I wouldn't mind him having a hit. Oh. He wrote it too. That's good for him."

BARBARA KAY
Chips With Everything PYE

"It's crap. Take it off! I don't even want to know who's doing that. Hate these. Trying to be comedy records when they're not even funny. There's nothing funny about chips. I've heard this sort of thing since before the First World War! There are hundreds of people who are funny on record, but not this. Who? Bob Dylan for one [*laughs*]."

“I’ve changed a lot”

1966, and George Harrison is evolving as fast as any Beatle. Marriage. New music (“I’ve been going for the Indian thing in a big way”). Strange dreams. All round, growth is afoot. “The Beatle bit is only a small part of myself,” he says. “I try to keep it in perspective”

NME 14|01|1966

MUSICAL EXPRESS
Beatle George writes!
THINK
CHRIS FARLOWE

IT MAY seem funny to some people that we Beatles haven’t got a single date in our 1966 diary. Not one job of work is fixed! It’s about the first time I can remember since we first started that we haven’t been able to say: “We’ve got to play at such-and-such a place on that date.”

Mind you, we KNOW that in about two months we’ve got to make another record, and we KNOW that sometime this year there’s another film to do. But that’s quite a way off. As you may have read in *NME* a couple of weeks back, we’re not going to do *A Talent For Loving* now.

It looks as though we’ll do a Western just the same. The fellow who started to script *A Talent For Loving* is working on a completely different story and that’ll probably be it. Beatle Film No 3 is what we call it now.

But the other day Paul was talking to our director, Dick Lester, who, incidentally, may not be able to do our next picture, and he said that even if the script was ready – which it isn’t – we couldn’t start until June. So it looks as though we’ll be filming in mid-summer for a release about November.

No, I’m not getting bored. There’s plenty to do here at home, pottering about. I’m getting tape recorders – like John and Paul have – fixed up into a sort of home studio. They can overdub vocal and instrumental tracks so that when they get an idea for a song they can make a demo record by themselves. I want to do the same.

You couldn’t say I was lonely, either. I’ve got this lady who comes in six days a week and keeps the place clean and shops for ciggies and food. She also cooks for me, but I’m quite capable of getting myself a bit of grub – as long as it’s nothing more complicated than a steak.

Matter of fact, I rang John up the other day to say I had this great lump of meat and would he ➤

ROBERT WHITAKER/GETTY IMAGES

"Anyone who's successful likes to have time off to relax": Harrison at the Tokyo Hilton during The Beatles' tour of Asia, 1966

like to come help me eat it. But he said he was just about to ring me because they had this big duck which was too much for them to manage alone.

He ended up eating his duck and me the lump of meat and I went round there afterwards.

Matter of fact John, Ringo and I are always popping into each other's now that we all live close together. And we will go out together quite a lot. The three of us (Paul was in Liverpool) went to Mick Jagger's party last Saturday night. Pity Brian Jones wasn't there. I like him.

If we don't all meet, we usually speak to each other at least once a day on the phone.

I go home to Liverpool about once a month now to see relatives and friends. We're still getting things for the house I bought my parents, so that takes up some of the time.

As a matter of fact, I'm still getting things for my house, too. I bought a few paintings at a gallery in Bond Street the other day. Nothing priceless, though. The dearest one was £25.

Haven't sold my Aston Martin yet. I never drive it now. With the new speed limit I'd never get out of second gear! I use the Mini. We've all got Mini Coopers on order with millions of extras like electrically operated windows and such.

John's decided to keep his Ferrari. He's having it painted black like his Rolls, which is away at the moment having things done to it. At the party the other night he said something about having the back seats converted into a bed. It'd slide out somehow.

And we see films. We had a special preview of *Thunderball* the other week. I liked it. But it's so ridiculously funny, and I'm sure people are supposed to take it seriously.

Haven't been to a real cinema for a few months now. The last time was when I went to see *Repulsion* at a place in Oxford Street; bumped into Paul Jones at the box office. It was quite a popular film among the groups.

I have thought of moving back into London. I saw a great old house for sale in Holland Park the other day – with all old chimney stacks. Looked like something out of *The Munsters*.

But the trouble with us is we change our minds so often, it's better to wait and take a firm decision. Mind you, I've got plenty of time to think about things these days.

GEORGE HARRISON

Harrison and model Pattie Boyd tie the knot at Epsom registry office, Surrey, January 21, 1966

Pattie wore a short, red fox-fur coat given to her by George as a wedding present. George settled for a dark, Victorian-style suit and one of those gents' fur coats, reminiscent of old gangster gear, seen on the telly sometimes.

At the press conference, a girl reporter breathed up to him and fluttered her eyelashes as she said: "How on earth did you manage to keep it a secret?"

"Children? There's still time for having a bit of fun, just us two"

GEORGE HARRISON

"Simple" said George. "We didn't tell anyone."

It was a truthful enough answer – and clue to the way so many Beatle secrets have been kept in the past. The security surrounding the famous four has got to a *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* pitch.

I struggled through a horde of Fleet Street types, lost a couple of coat buttons and had my feet trampled on before I managed to have a few words with George and Pattie.

George was taking it all quite calm, answering the same questions time after time without the slightest sign of boredom.

Did The Hollies go to the wedding, I asked? He looked blank for a moment. Then he laughed and said, "Hah! That thing about me knocking 'If I Needed Someone'. You shouldn't have done it, Alan! All the other papers took it up; it just got out of hand."

He wasn't annoyed but quickly moved on to other topics. Who wants to talk about songwriting when you've just got married?

"We're not going to take a honeymoon 'til all this fuss has calmed down," he told me. "I reckon we'll wait a while – 'til everybody least expects it!

"We've had some great wedding presents, you know. Things for the house and that. Paul gave us a fantastic Chinaman's head that you hang on the wall. It's great! We also had a smashin' antique table from Brian Epstein.

"John and Ringo knew we were going to get married, but there wasn't a question of them calling off their holiday. As I say, we wanted it to be as quiet as possible. They sent nice telegrams.

"When did we decide to get married? I think it was just before Christmas. We were in the car and Pattie was driving and I said, 'How about getting married, then?' and she said

George and Pattie on honeymoon in Barbados, Feb 1966

NME 28|01|1966

"I PITY Paul," said George Harrison with a wry grin, "'cos now he's the only Beatle left, you lot will hound him all over the place. He won't get a moment's peace."

By "you lot" George meant the world's press... dozens of photographers and journalists, who sardined into a small room at the weekend to hear about The Wedding Of The Year. For the record, George finally tied the knot just after the *NME* went to press last week (thanks). He and Pattie were married in a quiet ceremony at Epsom. Most of Pattie's relatives were there and George's mum and dad had had four days' notice to travel down from Liverpool.

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; AUBREY HART/EVENING STANDARD/GETTY IMAGES

The Beatles in August 1966: "Musically, we're only just starting," says George

'Yes, OK...' without taking her eyes off the road. What a driver!"

Incidentally, if you're a girl fan and you hate Pattie. It's really a pity you can't meet her in person. She's twice as attractive in real life as in pictures and she has a quiet charm that makes you realise why George looked again when he met her on the set of *A Hard Day's Night*, in which she had a bit part.

She was wearing a trouser suit at the press conference ("I know they're out but I like them") and someone asked George who would be "wearing the trousers" in their marriage. Quick as a flash he retorted: "I know Pattie's wearing the trousers now, but I'd like to assure you, I'll never be wearing a skirt!"

There were comments about him "breaking a million girls' hearts" by getting married, but he replied modestly: "Oh, I don't think so – 20, perhaps, if that! Anyway, I think most girls are intelligent and they wouldn't hate me just for getting married. I think it's a thing mainly blown up by the press.

"Paul getting married, I don't know. That's his business. If he wants to, good luck to him, and I know I wish him the very best. It just depends on him, and the girl he asks. Actually I feel sorry for him. He'll be hounded to death now us other three are married.

"I can't really give my own verdict on married life yet, except that it's great. You'll have to come back next week if you want another answer, give me a bit of time! Children? Oh, they can wait for about two years. There's still time for having a laugh and a bit of fun, just us two. And 'We Can Work It Out!'"

I'm sure they can and will. And I'd like to extend to them both the good wishes and congratulations of the *NME* and myself, lots of luck!

ALAN SMITH

MM 25|06|1966

"GEORGE HARRISON, perhaps the most independent of the four Beatles, has seen in the past two years a vast change in himself. And this change has meant, for George, a conscious backing away from the all-consuming image of being a Beatle.

Last week, The Beatles made virtually their first public appearance of 1966 when they succumbed to pressure from fans and appeared live on *Top Of The Pops*. During a break in the hectic rehearsals, George said: "I've changed a lot over the past two years, I've realised that the Beatle bit is only a small part of myself, and I try to keep it in perspective.

"I've increasingly become aware that there are other things in life than being a Beatle. I'm not fed up at being a Beatle, far from it. But I am fed up with all the trivial things that go with it.

"For instance, at one time, you could never go to the pictures or for a meal without some idiot taking a photograph of you. No-one uses the photographs, so he's wasting my time and his own for nothing.

"I suppose I have consciously been backing away from this side of Beatle life. In fact, it wouldn't worry me at all if nobody ever took my photograph again."

Has marriage to Pattie Boyd brought about this change in attitude? "No, I got married because I'd changed," replied George. "Marriage didn't bring this about. I'd already changed."

What did George think of the fans' criticism that they were neglected by The Beatles?

"I don't think we neglect them. Whenever we are doing something – like the new single – we do appearances. They can still see us. People still write articles about us and so they can still read about us."

George prefers to be out of the limelight these days. The constant glare of worldwide publicity has been off The Beatles for some time. And George prefers it that way.

"For one thing," he explained, "it means we can move about a lot more freely. London has always been better than anywhere else, because it's bigger and there are more places to get lost in. We've found it better these last few months that we've been out of the public eye. I prefer to be out of the public eye anyway.

"After all, what's the use of making money and becoming successful if you don't have any time to yourself? Anyone who's successful likes to have time off to relax. You may think we have more than most. But that's up to us."

How did George feel The Beatles were progressing musically? "Musically, we're only just starting," said George enthusiastically. "We've realised for ourselves that as far as

ROGER VIOLLET COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES

recording is concerned, most of the things that recording men have said were impossible for 39 years are in fact very possible.

"In the past, we've thought that the recording people knew what they were talking about. We believed them when they said we couldn't do this, or we couldn't do that. Now we know we can, and it's opening up a wide new field for us.

"In The Beatles, we're fortunate because each of us has something different going. I've been going for the Indian thing in a big way, John and Paul have their own thing going, and there are also things Ringo likes. Paul likes classical music – at least, I think he does from what I've been able to make out watching him – and he contributes the things like 'Yesterday' and 'Michelle', while John does things like 'Norwegian Wood'.

"This means there's no single influence, such as there is with Brian Wilson, in The Beach Boys. We have a wide range of things available to us, which makes it so exciting.

"For instance, we have a number on the new LP called 'Eleanor Rigby', which is Paul's. It's a bit like 'Yesterday', though not the same. On this we used four violins, two violas and two cellos to get the sound we wanted."

If, as seems likely, they move more into electronic or weird sounds, how do they propose to recreate these on stage?

"On 'Paperback Writer', there are no electronic sounds as such, just some recording techniques which are used in recording all the time. We'll be able to reproduce this the same as we can reproduce any of our records. If we get to the stage of doing some of the things on our LP on stage, I suppose we'll go on with a couple of tape recorders!"

Earlier, I braved the verbal battlefield of The Beatles' dressing room to ask whether The Beatles planned to visit any of their old Hamburg haunts on their German tour.

"I hope not," said John, grinning. "Brian Epstein won't get out of Hamburg alive as it is! We might just make it to the plane for the 89-hour flight to Japan. Is Hamburg the last date before Tokyo? Oh well, that kills visiting the clubs then."

Did they have any special numbers planned? "Before we go, we get a list of the hits in any particular country, so we include them. But we haven't decided what we are doing in Germany or Japan, yet."

The Beatles thought that the furore in America over the LP cover was "a bit soft", to quote Paul. "We were asked to do the picture with some meat and a broken doll," said Paul. "It was just a picture. It didn't mean anything. All this means is that we're being a bit more careful about the sort of picture we do. I liked it, myself."

John Lennon gave a grin and then roared: "Anyway, it's as valid as Vietnam!" Three other Beatles fell about.

The Beatles were going into the recording studios after *Top Of The Pops* to work on the final number on the new LP, which they hope to finish before they go to Germany. "I've got something going," said John. "About three lines so far."

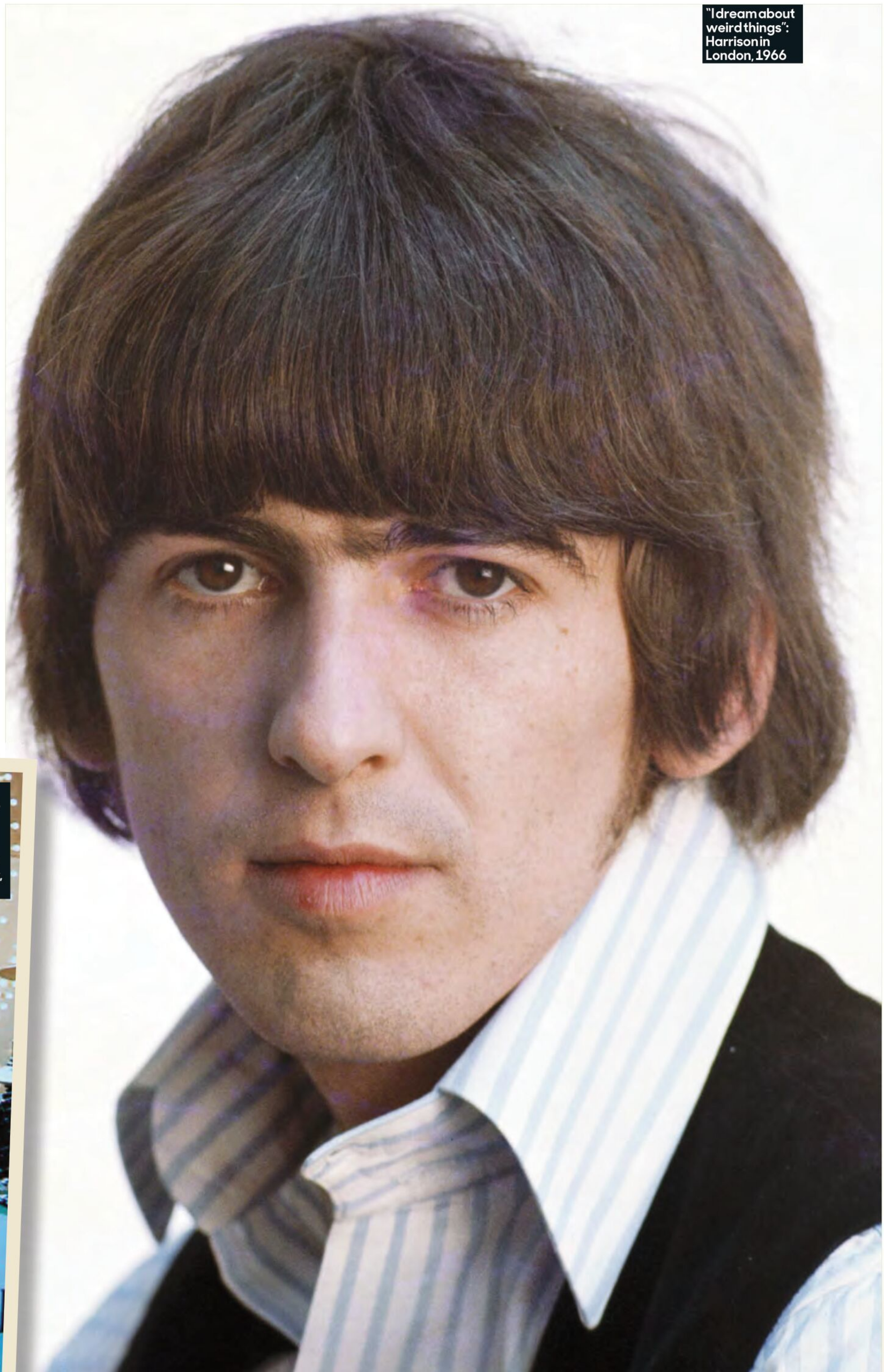
"Have you?" said Paul. "That's good."

Preparing to duck the verbal derision that was sure to follow, I asked The Beatles what they thought of Len Barry's anti-British pop comments, reported in last week's *MM*.

"He must be after publicity or something,"

"Camping works out quite cheap... The cost is next-door to nothing"

GEORGE HARRISON



"I dream about weird things": Harrison in London, 1966

MARK AND COLLEEN HAYWARD/GETTY IMAGES; RON HOWARD/GETTY IMAGES

The Fabs, "succumbing to pressure from fans" to make their only live appearance on *Top Of The Pops*, June 16, 1966

snorted Lennon. "I thought he had something going, but when he started talking about Freddie and Herman, it was a joke. And we've never even met him!"

Final comment came from a deadpan Paul, who summed up with mock seriousness: "I suppose he's entitled to his opinion. He's a good artist, if rather repetitive. In fact, he's the best artist we've never worked with!"

ALAN WALSH

NME 05|08|1966

FEAR of flying is an obsession with The Beatles. They all dream of air disasters in one way or another... and George dreams of them the most, it seems. But in George's case they aren't as morbid as you might think.

He told me: "One dream that really sticks in my mind is where an aeroplane came zoomin' down and crashed in front of me. Your readers might have guessed that, 'cos I don't like flyin'!

"Anyway, the plane crashed with a big explosion, and all the fuel flew through the air from miles away. I jumped away and lay flat on the ground to protect myself, but all this fuel was aflame and it landed on my legs."

He had started to speak quickly, reliving the event moment by moment. I must have looked horrified at his grisly description, because he looked up and grinned: "It was all funny, though. Me legs were burnin' but they weren't, like, hurtin'! I was sort of shouting 'Ooh, ooh, ouch' and things, jumpin' about all over the place like I'd sat down on a hot stove.

"All the hurrs on me legs were burned off and me trouser legs were in tatters. But don't ask me how it all ended. I think I woke up after that – 'cos I was feeling a bit warm, naturally."

He walked across the room and poured himself a Coke, allowing it to trickle coolly over the chunks of ice that bobbed up and down in the glass.

"Me dreams are usually a bit mad, y'know, and I also think a lot about people I know in real life. While I'm having a dream, all these people are passing through the story, or just standing by watching.

"I dream about weird things, like houses with distorting mirrors in them. Or people walking round with pan lids on top of their heads. Don't ask me why – it's all a bit funny.

"Another funny thing is, I dream about holidays a lot, like Paul. I'm always recollecting the times when me mum and me dad and I would go camping. That's always good for a laugh!

"'Ere, camping works out quite cheap, y'know. The cost is next-door to nothing, 'specially if you're a hitch-hiker. I remember Paul and I once lasted about three weeks on £2/10s, sleepin' in fields and things. That's for real – 'onest! More people wanna try it."

I asked him if most of his dreams were the laugh-and-be-happy kind, and he roared out laughing at the thought.

"Well," he said as he held on to his drink, slurping it around in the glass, "...you could say some are comedies – and some are thrillers!"

With manager Brian Epstein, "our pal", at the London Pavilion for the world premiere Richard Lester's *The Knack... And How To Get It*', June 3, 1965

MM 22|01|66

"I like hipsters – as trousers, not people"

GEORGE HARRISON GIVES *MELODY MAKER* HIS FIRST THOUGHT, BEST THOUGHT...

CHRISTMAS
Fun and twinkling lights. Nothing religious for me, really.

CHRIS FARLOWE
Great voice and nice lad.

BIRTH CONTROL
Nothing. I don't think about it.

CLEAN-UP-TV CAMPAIGN
Rubbish. Stupid. The more true-to-life TV the better.

JAGGER
Mick. The singer with the Stones.

OLDHAM
Andrew. I think a lot of Andrew as an A&R man. I agree with his ideas about recording pop music.

POP ART
I haven't seen enough to form an opinion.

MILLIONAIRES
Anyone who can be a millionaire in this country with the government taking most of it is a real winner. We're not millionaires.

OBSCENE LYRICS
Haven't heard any yet. It's more a case of obscene minds listening to them.

HAMBURG
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EWAN MacCOLL
I only heard of him for the first time when he moaned about Dylan.

FOLK
Good folk is great, but there's too much bad folk which people say is great.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS
They are a case of trying to buy brains for thick kids.

MURRAY THE K
He's smart, because he's always first one around with anything.

DEBS
I don't get them at all. Debs are something that've passed. Some people wish they hadn't.

EPPY
An amazing businessman and our pal.

COMMUNISM
It's terrible. I only know a little bit about it, but what I know is off.

ELVIS
Well done.

MIDDLE-AGED AUTOGRAPH HUNTERS
Depends on their attitude.

They are not bad on their own.

CARNABY STREET
I haven't been there. It's a nice street, I believe.

CLIFF
Looking rather undernourished.

FATHER
Which Art In Heaven.

JAMES BOND
Overdone.

GOD
The Naz.

PRIVATE EYE
Not as funny as they think it is, but quite nice.

PJ PROBY
A bit foolish, but great to have around.

BOXING
A violent sport.

ZOOT MONEY
Big voice and big smile.

PUNCH-UPS
To be avoided.

A TALENT FOR LOVING
A good book. A western, but different to others.

POLICEMEN
A bit simple and not understanding.

GERMANY
Good fun and laughs.

SCRUBBERS
Need scrubbing.

HIPSTERS
Great, I like hipsters. As trousers, not as people.

TREVOR HUMPHRIES/GETTY IMAGES

THE BEATLES

THE BEATLES 1966–70

RELEASED 1966–1970

Amid flower power, George blossoms. The sun now rises on a previously overshadowed talent. BY NEIL SPENCER.

1-2-3-4 KLANG! The Quiet Beatle was being noisy. And angry. The precise reason for George Harrison's ire was there in the title of the opening track of *Revolver*, "Taxman". George, always more canny about money matters than his fellow travellers, had learned that the group's income was being taxed at the spectacular rate of 19 shillings in the pound; 95 per cent of everything he earned was going to the government. There would, of course, be ways for accountants to offset this, but the central injustice burned up Harrison. The gnarly guitar riff that drives "Taxman", derived from the proto-funk of James Brown and others, is appropriately spiky. A generation later it would be seized, more or less intact, by Paul Weller for The Jam's "Start".

Though credited to Harrison, the song is very much an all-Beatles affair. Lennon chipped in with the lyric, adding backing vocals that gave equal condemnation of Prime Minister Harold Wilson and his Tory rival Ted Heath. McCartney supplied the scorching guitar solo, naturally but erroneously assumed to be Harrison's at the time, not least on account of its sitar-like overtones.

"Taxman" was, nonetheless, a personal victory for George, the first (and only) time that one of his songs had opened a Beatles album, while *Revolver* would be the first time he got three songs on a Fabs release. That he was considered a junior partner in the group by Lennon and McCartney was another source of anger for him, something reflected in a later composition, "Only A Northern Song", a throwaway piece proffered for *Sgt Pepper* that would eventually surface on *Yellow Submarine* and a cynical reference to Northern Songs publishing (part owned by Lennon and McCartney) to which he was reluctantly signed.

"Taxman" was a victory for George, the first (and only) time one of his songs had opened a Beatles LP

It may be that the two major songwriters felt they had to give George more of a squeeze on account of his recent threat to quit the group, but he had undeniably raised his game with the three songs here. "I Want To Tell You", a cousin to "If I Needed Someone", again sounded more like a collective Fabs affair than the obligatory "George song", a mildly anguished complaint about the difficulties of communicating feelings and ideas – a subject familiar enough to The Beatles' young audience – built on wonky chords but seasoned with sweet vocal harmonies.

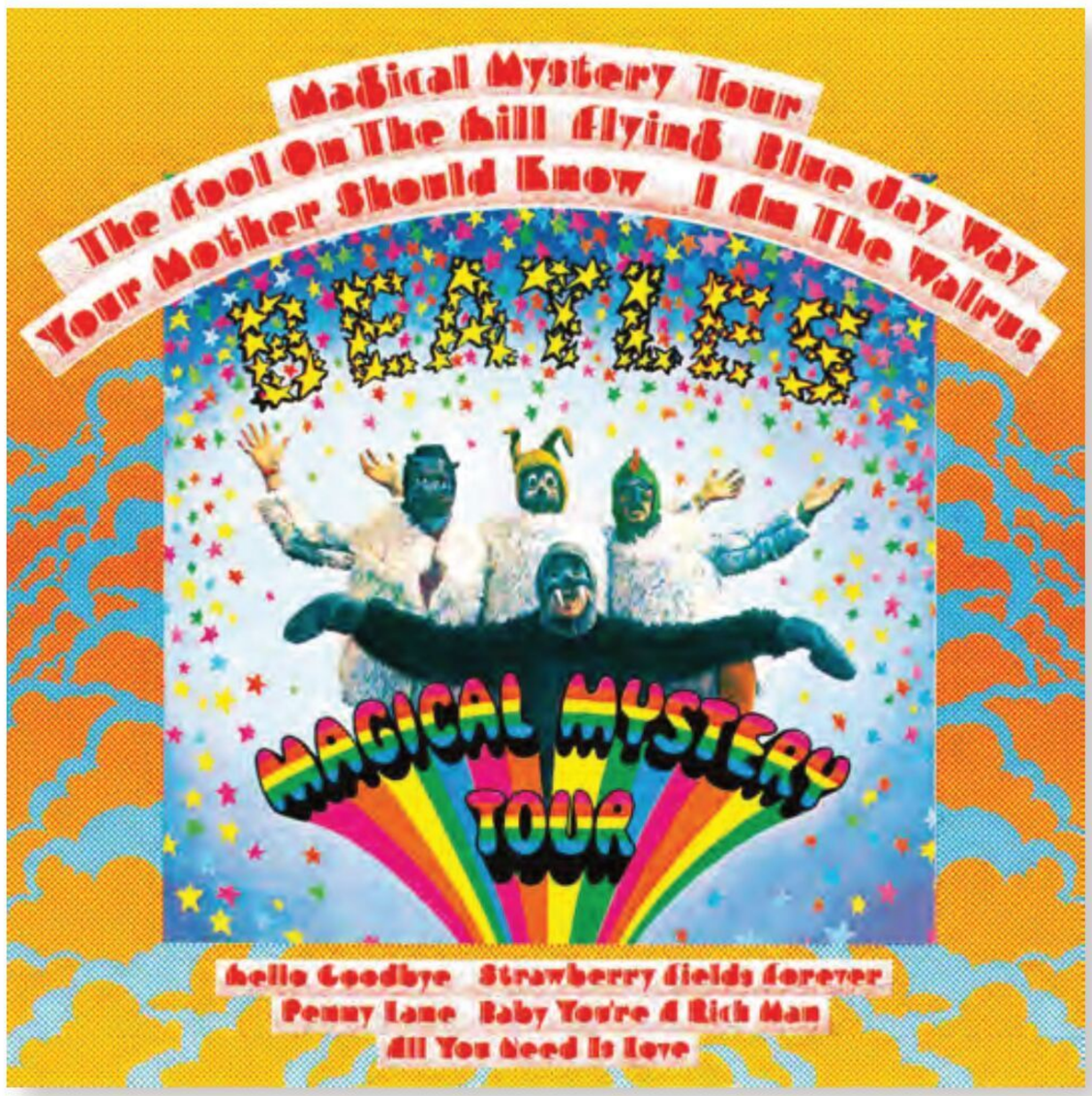
"Love You To" was, aside from the junior sitar on "Norwegian Wood", the first result of Harrison's interest in Indian music, its drone-like vocal set against a mixture of guitar and sitar (the latter unlikely to be Harrison's work) and tabla.

George was not alone in exploring the sounds of the East. In summer '65, The Kinks' "See My Friends" had borrowed Indian drones after Ray Davies had watched Indian fishermen chanting during a stopover from an Australian tour. After "Norwegian Wood", and Brian Jones plucking a sitar on the Stones' "Paint It Black", the instrument was suddenly de rigueur, for posing as much as playing, and featured on Traffic's "Paper Sun" early in '67. Harrison would, however, be the first to fully embrace India's culture and religion, his influence cast first over The Beatles themselves and thereby over Western youth culture as a whole.

Quite where George's sitar and earnest exposition of Hinduism slotted into The Beatles' oeuvre was at first unclear.

mono
REVOLVER

SGT PEPPER'S
LONELY HEARTS
CLUB BAND
BEATLES


Magical Mystery Tour
The fool On The hill flying Blue Day Way
Your Mother Should Know I Am The Walrus
MAGICAL MYSTERY
TOUR
Hello Goodbye Strawberry fields forever
Penny Lane Baby You're A Rich Man
All You Need Is Love

The BEATLES
№ 0034962

The Beatles
Yellow Submarine

Their next album, originally conceived as a record about Liverpool (hence "Penny Lane" and "Strawberry Fields Forever"), had morphed into a loosely themed piece of cod Edwardiana. Packed with amazing music – his "Only A Northern Song" was justly sent packing – it at first appeared that *Sgt Pepper* would include no Harrison song. Then George came up with "Within You Without You". Featuring none of the other Beatles, it was played by Harrison and a clutch of musicians from the London Asian Music Circle. Harrison had written the track on harmonium after an evening with his old Hamburg friend Klaus Voormann, in which they had discussed the spiritual vacuum in Western society.

The result – a slow, sonorous melody topped with preachy lyrics – was quite at odds with the jaunty, melodic mood of *Pepper*. Placed at the start of Side Two of the LP, where it couldn't kill the album's clever segues, it was for many an irrelevance. It was all very well for Harrison to pass judgement on "*people who hide themselves behind a wall of illusion*", but who was he, an adored millionaire, to wag the finger?

Yet the track embodied a yearning for spiritual fulfillment that was a major strand in the era's hippie idealism, one that had been in play during the Beat Zen years of Kerouac and Ginsberg a generation back, and – if you wanted to delve into the Edwardian era that was suddenly the rage – there in the writings of Madame Blavatsky, Kenneth Grahame (*The Wind In The Willows*) and, a little later, JRR Tolkien (*Lord Of The Rings*) had become an accessory in hippie backpacks). In the words of the late Ian MacDonald, "Within You Without You" was "the necessary sermon that comes with the community singing".

Nevertheless, the track picked unnecessary sides. Who were the "they" in the phrase "*If they only knew*"? Harrison's spiritual snobbery would remain a problematic theme in his writing, not least as his walk and his talk were so frequently at odds. The issue was present, though overlooked, on 'the White Album', where Harrison's "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" quickly became a favourite. Lyrically the song is a continuation of "Within You Without You", deploring spiritual sloth, except the "they" of the former has become "you", as in "*You were diverted, you were perverted too*". Who was George talking to? His fans?

As a piece of powerhouse rock the track has undeniable heft, however, with more melody than George could often summon, and some exquisite lead guitar from Eric Clapton, his guest presence a sign that The Beatles were fragmenting as a unit. Clapton had been reluctant to muscle in on a Beatles session, but Harrison insisted, and got the performance he wanted from his friend. The music's potency isn't matched by the ponderous lyric – "*I look at the floor and I see it needs sweeping*" – while an acoustic version, released on *Anthology 2*, better captures the song's melancholic mood.

The accusatory tone continues on "Piggies", a clumsy attack on selfish material greed and/or a sneer at the "pigs", US slang for police, and/or a snipe at pork eaters (a no-no in Hinduism). Whatever way, it's an ill-advised piece of vitriol that came back to haunt its creator when the Manson gang, having adopted "Helter Skelter" as a piece of graffiti for their murder spree, daubed "Piggies" above one murder victim (the song suggests that Piggies "*need a damn good whacking*"). Besides, you can be sure the Fabs had downed a few bacon butties in their time.

"Savoy Truffle" was, by comparison, innocuous, a list of fillings from a box of Good News chocolates, with a warning that "*what's sweet now turns so sour*". It's an empty little ditty, jazzed up with a nice 1940s sax section; the track's best feature.

George redeemed himself with "Long, Long, Long", a simple but resonant expression of joy that, after "*so many years I was wasting*", he had found God. The sound is echo-heavy and given a slightly haunted feeling by McCartney's organ, while Ringo's sparse drumming adds a touch of booming drama.

It would be a while before anything of comparable quality surfaced from George, but he remained busy, stockpiling songs that would emerge on *All Things Must Pass*. The three songwriting Beatles were all prone to hoarding, and the songs and scraps in their war chests would variously be employed on *Magical Mystery Tour* and *Yellow Submarine* – neither of which featured their best work – on B-sides and on *Abbey Road* and *Let It Be*, the chronology of those releases not always tallying with their composition or recording dates.

Harrison had come up with "Blue Jay Way" in the summer of 1967. While in California to see Pattie Boyd's sister in LA he took time to visit San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury, hoping to find an arty, music-filled scene, but instead encountering drug-sodden, panhandling squalor. But before heading north, waiting in the fog-bound hills of LA for Fabs publicist Derek Taylor to show up, George composed the vaguely mysterious song, which became his contribution to *Magical Mystery Tour*. Alas, no amount of double-tracking, phasing and backwards tapes can prevent George's song about boredom being underwhelming itself.

George had better in the bag. Earlier in the summer of '67, The Beatles had recorded Harrison's "It's All Too Much", which would surface 18 months later on *Yellow Submarine*. It's the most self-consciously psychedelic track Harrison created, essentially a celebration of the LSD that he and Lennon were voraciously consuming, but tinged with Vedic awareness. The Beatles' personalised harmonium provides an Indian-like drone as Ringo hammers away amid a confusion of guitars and voices. George sings about "*floating down the stream of time from life to life*" and seeing "*the love that surrounds you*" and asks, "*Show me that I'm everywhere.*" Amid the gentle mayhem come a trumpet blast (hijacked from Jeremiah Clarke's "Prince Of Denmark March") and a lyric from The Merseybeats' "Sorrow" – "*With your long blonde hair and your eyes of blue*", a likely reference to Pattie. All in all it's an enjoyable evocation of a madcap acid trip, and as such the number was eagerly covered by inner cosmonauts like Steve Hillage and the Grateful Dead.

Meanwhile, George's songwriting found non-Beatle outlets. Among the convolutions of Harrison's friendship with Eric Clapton (aside from Eric cheating with Pattie) was Cream's

CRITICS' VERDICT

REVOLVER
"'Taxman' is a fast, rocking song, with twangy guitar and vocal by George Harrison, singing a lyric about dealings with the tax inspector."
Allen Evans, NME, July 29, 1966

"'Love You To': Virtually straight Indian sound, complete with tabla drummer and tremendous sitar part by George [...] One of the most striking tracks."
MM, July 30, 1966

SGT PEPPER
"All the music retains the Beatle stamp of humour, sorrow, sympathy and cynicism [...] George entertains with some hot sitar music..."
Chris Welch, MM, June 3, 1967

"MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR" EP
"A church organ starts it off, and for a minute sounded like 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale', but John, sitting in 'Blue Jay Way', leads us off into a whirlpool of sound..."
Nick Logan, NME, November 25, 1967

THE BEATLES
'While My Guitar Gently Weeps': Chung-chung beat, very strong melody, moving into a slightly Hendrix thing. Another hit for somebody."
Alan Smith, NME, November 9, 1968

ABBEY ROAD
"Floating, aching melody, ['*Something*' *is*] virtually about the best thing he's ever written, sadness in a crying blend of piano and strings."
Alan Smith, NME, September 20, 1969

LET IT BE
"'I Me Mine': Great organ/guitar intro, meditative verse and a tempo switch in and out of the rocking chorus."
Richard Williams, MM, May 9, 1970

Harrison in 1967 with fellow Beatles, none of whom played on "Within You Without You", his contribution to that year's *Sgt Pepper*

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

TRACKMARKS

THE BEATLES
REVOLVER (1966)
George songs:
Taxman **10/10**
Love You Too **9/10**
I Want To Tell You **8/10**

THE BEATLES
SGT PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND (1967)
George songs:
Within You Without You **8/10**

THE BEATLES
MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR (1967)
George songs:
Blue Jay Way **4/10**

THE BEATLES
THE BEATLES (1968)
George songs:
While My Guitar Gently Weeps **10/10**
Piggies **6/10**
Long, Long, Long **9/10**
Savoy Truffle **8/10**

CREAM
GOODBYE (1969)
George songs:
Badge **8/10**

THE BEATLES
YELLOW SUBMARINE (1969)
George songs:
Only A Northern Song **7/10**
It's All Too Much **8/10**

THE BEATLES
ABBEY ROAD (1969)
George songs:
Something **10/10**
Here Comes The Sun **10/10**

THE BEATLES
LET IT BE (1970)
George songs:
I Me Mine **6/10**
For You Blue **5/10**

"Badge", co-composed by George when Clapton was struggling to fulfill his commitment to Cream's *Goodbye*, which required each of the trio to submit a new song. Written in Clapton's garden in autumn 1968 and issued as a mildly successful single the following spring, it's a delightful if incoherent piece, full of chiming guitars among which "D'Angelo Mysterioso", ie Harrison) is credited.

Slight though "Badge" was, it helped establish Harrison as a songwriting force independent of the group to which he no longer felt much allegiance. The Beatles' vast fan club could be forgiven for not fearing as much, given that Harrison was in the best writing form of his life. "Old Brown Shoe", recorded in the spring of '69, deserved better than to be consigned to the B-side of "The Ballad Of John And Yoko". More urgent and playful than George's customary doleful offerings, it was, like Lennon's A-side, informed by reggae's characteristic off-beat but taken at a far less leisurely clip.

An elaborate love call – "*Who knows, baby, you may comfort me*" – the song plays with The Beatles' customary duality – "*I want a girl with short hair that sometimes likes to wear it long*" – and benefits from Billy Preston's keyboards and from a Harrison guitar solo that owes plenty to his pal Eric. "Old Brown Shoe" overcame its B-side status to become a Harrison staple, shown by an almost exact reproduction on the album of Harrison's 1991 tour of Japan.

Even better lay round the next bend in the road. "Something" and "Here Comes The Sun", respectively recorded in the spring and summer of 1969, and released in September on *Abbey Road*, would become the twin, late-flowering marvels of Harrison's career as a Beatle. John Lennon, rarely the sentimentalist, thought "Something" the best thing on the album, and he wasn't alone. Frank Sinatra swooned for it, and it would become one of the group's most covered songs. It also became Harrison's only A-side single, a chart-topper in many territories, though not at home. The song's simplicity is the key to its appeal. George Martin's orchestral backings remain discreet, while the song's sentiments are universal for lovers everywhere, the thrill of unconditional love balanced by a middle eight that admits "*Will my love grow? I don't know*".

"Piggies" is an ill-advised piece of vitriol that came back to haunt its creator

"Here Comes The Sun" was written, again, in the company of Clapton in early spring of '69, after George had bunked off from yet another Apple meeting, which helps explain the sense of relief that permeates – it isn't just about the weather. George Martin did the song proud with an unusual string and woodwind arrangement that was topped off by an overdub of Moog synth, a new toy recently acquired in the US.

George's contributions to *Let It Be* tarnished his late-Beatles achievements a little. "For You Blue" wasn't up to the standard Harrison set himself on *Abbey Road*. Dedicated to Pattie, it has little to say apart from "*I love you girl it's true*", which at this stage of The Beatles' career wasn't enough to justify a song. Like most other guitarists in Britain, Harrison had been playing more bottleneck guitar (Elmore James' "Dust My Broom" was inescapable), but the solo here is in fact Lennon's work.

The last track to be recorded for *Let It Be* was Harrison's "I Me Mine", a song he had written 18 months earlier – the film of *Let It Be* shows George playing it to Ringo. It's barely a song at all, just a lament about the endless haggling within the group, with "*everyone coming on strong all the time*". Harrison contributes a vexed guitar solo, and Phil Spector ladles on a massive string section – well he would, wouldn't he? – but, like "For You Blue", the track is mere filler, not worthy of either group of George himself, a sad ending to a magnificent tale. ॐ

SNAP STILLS/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Harrison plays Pied Piper to San Francisco's hippies in Golden Gate Park, August 7, 1967

“It’s up to everyone to spread love”

Showered with drugs in Haight-Ashbury ’67, George concludes, “You can’t get high on LSD.” Enter the Maharishi, and enlightenment ensues: the “illusion” of western society and how the next Messiah will usher us into the Golden Age. “He’s just gonna come down and zap them all.”

MELODY MAKER 19|08|67

“YOU are our leader, George,” a hippie told the Beatle, hugging him. “No,” said George. “Wrong.” “Oh yes, man,” the hippie insisted, running to keep up with the line of a thousand or more surging eight abreast along Haight Street. “You know where it’s at, man.” “It’s you who should be leading yourself,” George said, pursuing his point and also a steady path towards the limousine in Masonic Street. “You don’t want to be following leaders, me or anyone else.” “Too much,” said the crowd, and danced down the street telling their neighbours it was the scene of scenes, which in a way it was, for George and everybody.

“Hey man,” shouted someone way back in the line. “I gotta turn George on. Let me through. I got to lay some STP on him, man. Let me get to him, man.” The voice got louder.

(“I heard him the first time, five minutes before he got to me,” said George later. “But I tried to ignore it, hoping it wasn’t going to happen.”)

“I got the STP, man,” the voice cried nearer and nearer, and a lot of hands went out from the blankets.

“Give us some, man. Us too, man. Lay it on us. Let’s do our thing all together with George.”

I felt a hard shoulder in my soft back and it was the STP hand, finally a couple of yards from the lucky beneficiary. A hand reached out with the purple pill between a thumb and forefinger.

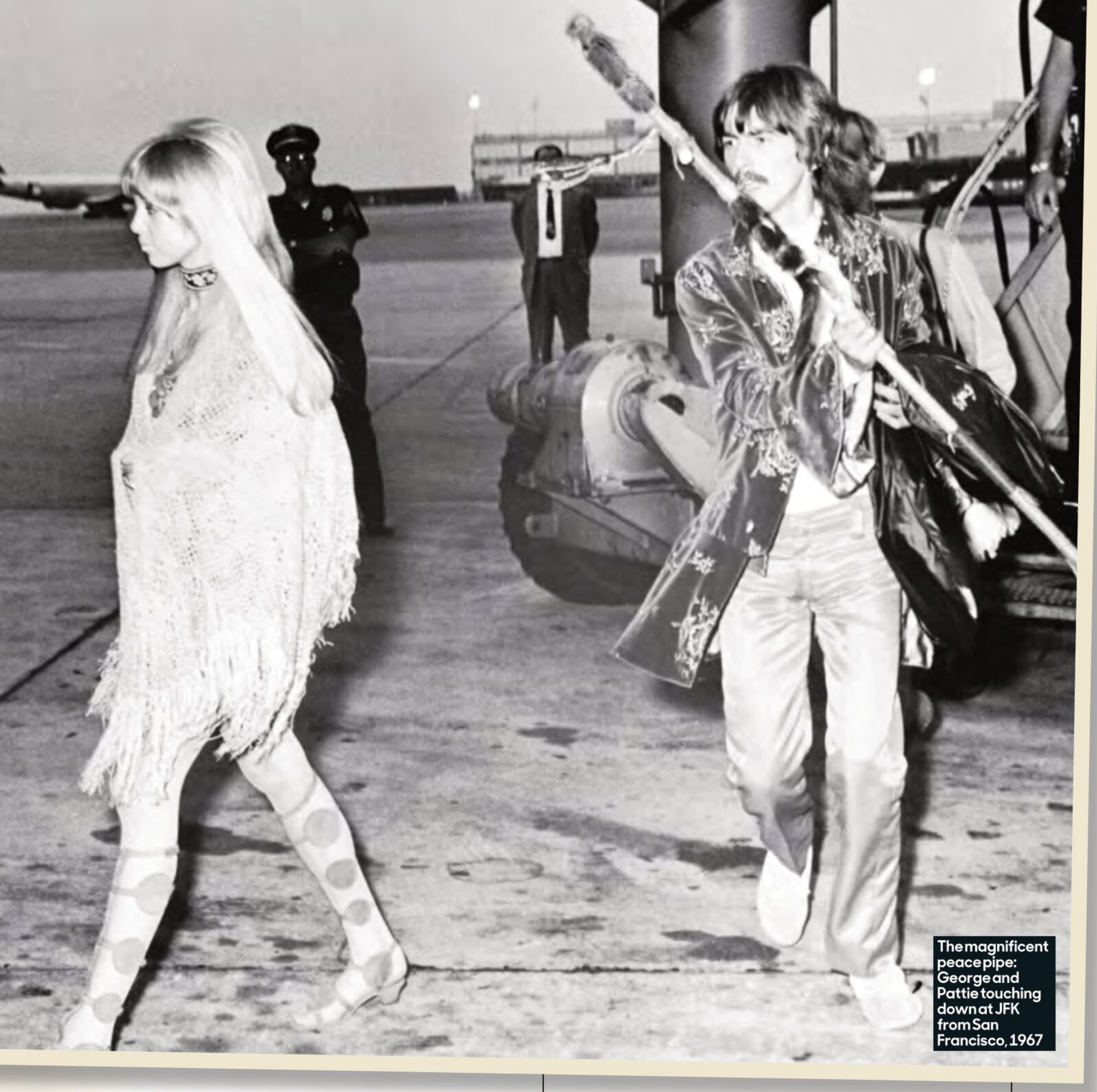
“Here, George, I got the stuff to lay on you, man. STP, man. Blow your mind.”

George kept on moving, as much to keep upright as to make progress. “George,” commanded the voice behind the hand that held the pill. “This is for you. Turn yourself on, man.”

“No,” said George. “Take it away. That’s bullshit, man. Karma Yoga, remember? It isn’t the answer. The answer’s in your own head. Isn’t it? I don’t want that. Get it away and thanks anyway.”

The hand fell back and the head slumped a bit and the fellow went through the part-feeble, part-brave dialogue of the spurned who has been seen to be spurned. The pusher was hardly a man, no longer a boy. He was very well intentioned, ➤

BETTMANN/GETTYIMAGES



The magnificent peace pipe: George and Pattie touching down at JFK from San Francisco, 1967

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

one thought. He wanted to help. He wanted to give. He was a joiner, wanting a part of him and the essence of his beliefs to pass from him to the leader. ("Let's you and me have one for the road, Jesus.")

The purple pill and the holder went from sight and sound and I didn't see him again until we were back in the car and a face crowded into the window. It vanished for a moment while an older face said: "Hey George. You guys certainly got to my wife, George. Your picture's in her pocketbook, George."

"Great," said George, laughing with relief and happiness and fear and bewilderment but crying without tears because *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* hadn't apparently made its point clearly enough.

The STP face appeared, hostile and sad and hurt and flecked with sweat and spit from running and shouting. "Hey George, I tried to give you a gift that would turn you on, man, and you put me down, man. I don't like that, man. That was wrong, man."

"No it wasn't," said George. "You don't need it."

"You put me down," said the man, pulling out his knotted face.

"It's soft," said George to himself later. "He'll have to help himself. He has a choice."

He was still exhilarated and up and buoyant and pink-cheeked from the fantastic "Pied Piper" march through Haight-Ashbury, a journey motivated as much by curiosity as by a desire to make his warm involvement in the free world movement felt in America.

But as the car pulled away and the cheers and goodbyes and waving dwindled and died, he

"Hey George, I tried to give you a gift that would turn you on, man, and you put me down, man..."

pulled from his pocket a picture of Paramahansa Yogananda, author of *Autobiography Of A Yogi*, and he held it up so that Alexis [*Mardas, AKA Magic Alex*], the Greek electronics genius who by his creative skills and spiritual kinship has become inextricably involved with The Beatles, could see the peace of the Indian's face.

"This is still it, Alex," he said. "Ravi and all them are still right. This is where it is."

What had George Harrison/Beatle/provincial Englishman/disciple of Ravi Shankar/young married sitar tyro brought up on Chuck Berry/MBE/student of Yoga/laconic comedian/possessor of many images, countless conflicting elements and boundless honesty and sincerity, expected of Haight-Ashbury?

He didn't exactly know afterwards but he felt that what he'd expected he had found in quick flashes, and it was true that within the huge, hurrying, harrying, hassling crowd, he had experienced no hostility, no ugliness, no lack of consideration for himself as a being.

It wasn't that Haight-Ashbury let him down or he was not, he considered, important enough to expect a new community to gratify his requirements. But he had expected a more profound peace, a greater "cool", could be found.

He himself has signed the British petition for the revision of anti-marijuana laws. He is clearly in the vanguard of the strive towards liberation of the human spirit. No-one doubts where he and John, Paul and Ringo stand on civil rights, war, lies, hate, bullshit-games, material acquisitions for their own sake or any of the other elements of society which the hippies spurn.

Maybe he hadn't been prepared for the throbbing drum-beat of "turn on, get high, be loaded, everybody must get stoned" which pulsed through the throng. Presents were showered on him and he was happy that people wanted to give.

Giving is lovely. The magnificent peace pipe that was thrust into his hand, he considered that to be fantastic. Bound in wool and fur of many colours, as tall as a spear, finely fashioned, it was a special gift and it was received well.

But with it came handfuls of cigarette papers and acid-rambling poems and drawings, an idiotic poster of a fellow with 1965 Byrd-glasses screwing his face into a wrinkled apple as he drew the last choking draughts from a marijuana roach. All this and the rejected cap of STP. Too much?

Well, I don't know. None of us do. Well, we got to Haight-Ashbury at fiveish and started to walk up Masonic Street from the dental school.

After a hundred steps a guy who takes pictures for *Newsweek* says, "Remember me? I was at Monterey." His face was an inch from mine and I said, "Yes, I remember you. Hi Mike." "I'm Gene," he said, "but you were near... Mike was the writer with me." I said, "Hi, Gene. You are the one who always comes an inch from my face when you talk." "Isn't that George?" he said, from an inch away. "Yes," I said. "I'll be back," he said and was, and the pictures he took were across the world in 24 hours.

THE crowd was growing. Pattie Harrison and her sister Jenny had miniminimini skirts and were certainly the prettiest creatures on the street, so a very nice chap with a tall hat asked them to pose for a picture. They did so and then someone gave George a crown not of thorns but of flowers, which he wore at a comical angle by accident, having no mirror.

Neil Aspinall said, "Where are we walking to?" and someone said, "There's a park with a hill called Hippie Hill." George said, "Well let's go to the park," and everyone looked awfully happy and there was a nice moment. There were many. It was when the dealers started dealing and the wheels started wheeling that it became less attractive.

So across the crosswalk, hundreds of us strode and danced, with the word spreading everywhere, George Harrison's here. We rounded

"High as balloons": The Beatles at EMI Studios, Abbey Road, June 25, 1967

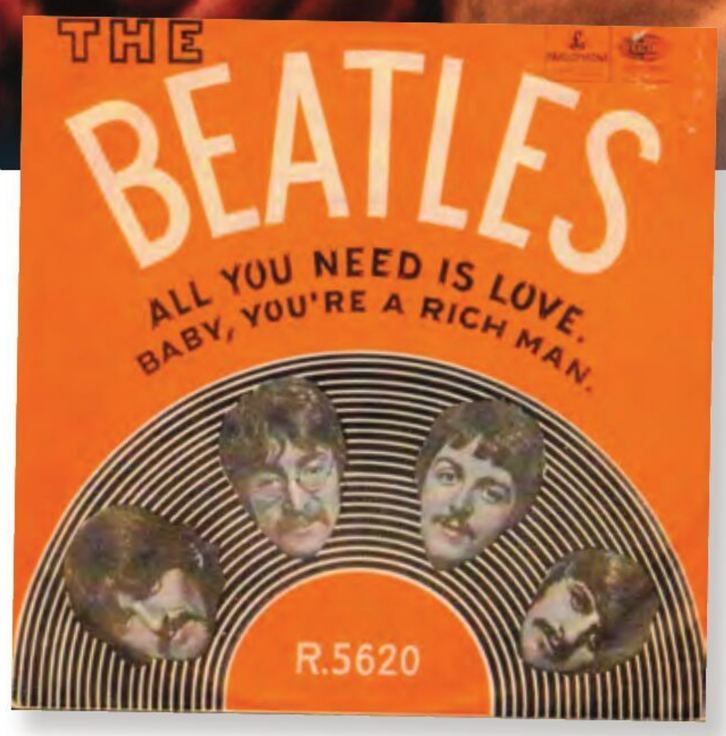
the pond and walked up a grassy bank where we sat. "This isn't Hippie Hill," said someone being specific and George said, "Yes, it is now, isn't it?" Everyone laughed out of a mingled desire to please and because it really was too much. It was a marvellous 10 minutes.

From somewhere came a young chap with a guitar and asked George to play. "No," said George. "It's your guitar. You play for us."

The chap blushed and said, "Hey man. Not with you here."

"Go on," said George "It's yours. Play if you want to." The case was unzipped and then zipped and I said to him quietly, "Play. Why not? It would be nice." So, still embarrassed, he slowly unzipped the case and began to play, not badly. There came a chanter like an old man singing in the shower, not musical but really enjoying the sound of his own voice, which is a very healthy thing. Why not?

The crowd was having a great time and so was George in the middle, alternately laughing and answering questions. Then suddenly there was some tension because a lot of people started asking for cigarettes in that haunted way tense



people have and it was clear nobody could believe it could last, so the guitar player handed the instrument to George and said "Please give us a chord." "OK," said George. "Here's a G. And an E, and so on up and down the scale."

The crowd was magic and so was the moment. It was a special fragment of fantasy trapped by all of us for ever.

Thus the Beatle came and went among the hippies and they were very kind to him and to all of us.

HARRY PULES

MELODY MAKER 02 & 09|09|67

"YOU may think this interview is of no importance to me," said George Harrison across a table in NEMS Enterprises' Mayfair offices. "But you'd be wrong. It's very important. We have realised that it's up to everyone – including The Beatles – to spread love and understanding and to communicate this in any way we can."

George, radiant in flowered shirt and trousers, long flowing hair and bushy moustache, lit up a dismal wet London day by his clothes, his friendliness and the warmth of his replies. George spoke quietly but frankly about many subjects – from God to LSD – and the 90-minute conversation examined the whole existence of the most introspective Beatle.

You have just returned from San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury. What

HUTTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

The Beatles finishing *Magical Mystery Tour* at a film studio in Soho, London, June 1967

were your impressions of life there?
"Well, we were only in Haight-Ashbury for about 30 minutes but I did see quite a bit. We parked our limousine a block away just to appear the same and walked along the street for about a hundred yards, half like a tourist and half like a hippie. We were trying to have a look in a few shops."

Who was with you?
"Pattie, her sister Jenny, a friend of Jenny's, Derek Taylor, Neil Aspinall, our road manager, and Magic Alex, who's a friend. We walked along and it was nice. At first they were just saying 'Hello' and 'Can I shake your hand'... things like that. Then more and more people arrived and it got bigger and bigger. We walked into the park and it just became a bit of a joke. All these people were just following us along."

One of them tried to give you STP, I believe?
"They were trying to give me everything. This is a thing that I want to try and get over to people. Although we've been identified a lot with hippies, especially since all this thing about pot and LSD's come out, we don't want to tell anyone else to have it because it's something that's up to the person himself. Although it was like a key that opened the door and showed a lot of things on the other side, it's still up to people themselves what they do with it.

"LSD isn't a real answer. It doesn't give you anything. It enables you to see a lot of possibilities that you may never have noticed before, but it isn't the answer. You don't just take LSD and that's it forever, you're OK.

"A hippie is supposed to be someone who becomes aware – you're hip if you know what's going on. But if you're really hip you don't get involved with LSD and things like that. You see the potential that it has and the good that can come from it, but you also see that you don't really need it.

"I needed it the first time I ever had it. Actually, I didn't know that I'd had it. I'd never even heard of it then. This is something that just hasn't been told. Everybody now knows that we've had it, but the circumstances were that somebody just shoved it in our coffee before we'd ever heard of the stuff. So we happened to have it quite unaware of the fact.

"I don't mind telling people I've had it. I'm not embarrassed. It makes no difference, because I know that I didn't actually go out and try to get some."

You've never deliberately set out to take LSD?
"No, not really. For me, it was a good thing but it showed me that LSD isn't really the answer to everything. It can help you to go from A to B, but when you get to B, you see C. And you see that, to get really high, you have to do it straight. There are special ways of getting high without drugs – with yoga, meditation and all those things. So this was the disappointing thing about LSD.

"In this physical world we live in, there's always duality – good and bad, black and white, yes and no. Whatever there is, there's always the opposite. There's always something equal and opposite to everything, and this is why you can't say LSD is good or it's bad, because it's good AND it's bad. It's both of them and it's neither of them all together. People don't consider that.

"Haight-Ashbury was a bit of a shock because although there were so many great people, really nice people who only wanted to be friends and didn't want to impose anything or be anything, there was still the black bit, the opposite. There was the bit where people were so out of their minds trying to shove STP on me, and acid – every step I took there was somebody trying to give me something – but I didn't want to know about that. I want to get high, and you can't get high on LSD. You can take it and take it as many times as you like, but you get to a point that you can't get any further unless you stop taking it.

"Haight-Ashbury reminded me a bit of the Bowery. There were these people just sitting round the pavement begging, saying, 'Give us some money for a blanket.' These are hypocrites. They are making fun of tourists and all that and at the same time they are holding their hands out begging off them, that's what I don't like.

"I don't mind anybody dropping out of anything, but it's the imposition on somebody else I don't like. The moment you start dropping out and then begging off somebody else to help you then it's no good. I've just realised through a lot of things that it doesn't matter what you are as long as you work. It doesn't matter if you chop wood, as long as you chop and keep chopping. Then you get what's coming to you. You don't have to drop out. In fact, if you drop out, you put yourselves further away from the goal of life than if you keep working."

TRINITY MIRROR/MIRRORPIX/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Have you any defined idea of what your goal in life is?
"We've all got the same goal whether we realise it or not. We're all striving for something which is called God. For a reunion, complete. Everybody has realised at some time or other that no matter how happy they are, there's still always unhappiness that comes with it.

"Everyone is a potential Jesus Christ, really. We are all trying to get to where Jesus Christ got. And we're going to be on this world until we get there. We're all different people and we are all doing different things in life, but that doesn't matter because the whole point of life is to harmonise with everything, every aspect in creation. That means down to not killing the flies, eating the meat, killing people or chopping trees down."

Can we ever get it down to this level?
"You can only do it if you believe in it. Everybody is potentially divine. It's just a matter of self-realisation before it will all happen. The hippies are a good idea – love, flowers and that is great – but when you see the other half of it, it's like anything. I love all these people too, those who are honest and trying to find a bit of truth and to straighten out the untruths. I'm with them 100 per cent, but when I see the bad side of it I'm not so happy."

To get anywhere near what you are talking about, do you believe you have to be a hippie or a flower person?
"Anybody can do it. I doubt if anyone who is a hippie or flower person feels that he is. It's only you, the press, who call us that. They've always got to have some tag. If you like, I'm a hippie or a flower person. I know I'm not. I'm George Harrison, a person. Just like everybody else, but different at the same time. You get to a point where you realise that it doesn't matter what people think you are, it's what you think you are yourselves that matters. Or what you know you are. Anyone can make it. You don't have to put a flowery shirt on."

Could a bank clerk make it?
"Anyone can, but they've got to have the desire. The Beatles got all the material wealth that we needed and that was enough to show us that this thing wasn't material. We are all in the physical world, yet what we are striving for isn't physical. We all get so hung up with material things like cars and televisions and houses, yet what they can give you is only there for a little bit and then it's gone."

Did you ever reach the point where you considered getting rid of the material wealth?
"Yes, but now that I've got the material thing in perspective, it's OK. The whole reason I've got material things is because they were given to me as a gift. So it's not really bad that I've got it because I didn't ask for it. It was just mine. All I did was be me.

"All we ever had to do was just be ourselves and it all happened. It was there, given to us. All this. But then, it was given to us to enable us to see that that wasn't it. There was more to it."

Where do these beliefs fit in with the musical side of The Beatles?
"I'm a musician. I don't know why. This is a thing that I've looked back on since my birth. Many people think life is predestined. I think it is vaguely, but it's still up to you which way your life's going to go. All I've ever done is keep being me and it's just all worked out. It just did it all... magic... it just did it. We never planned anything. So it's obvious – because I'm a musician now, that's what I was destined to be. It's my gig."

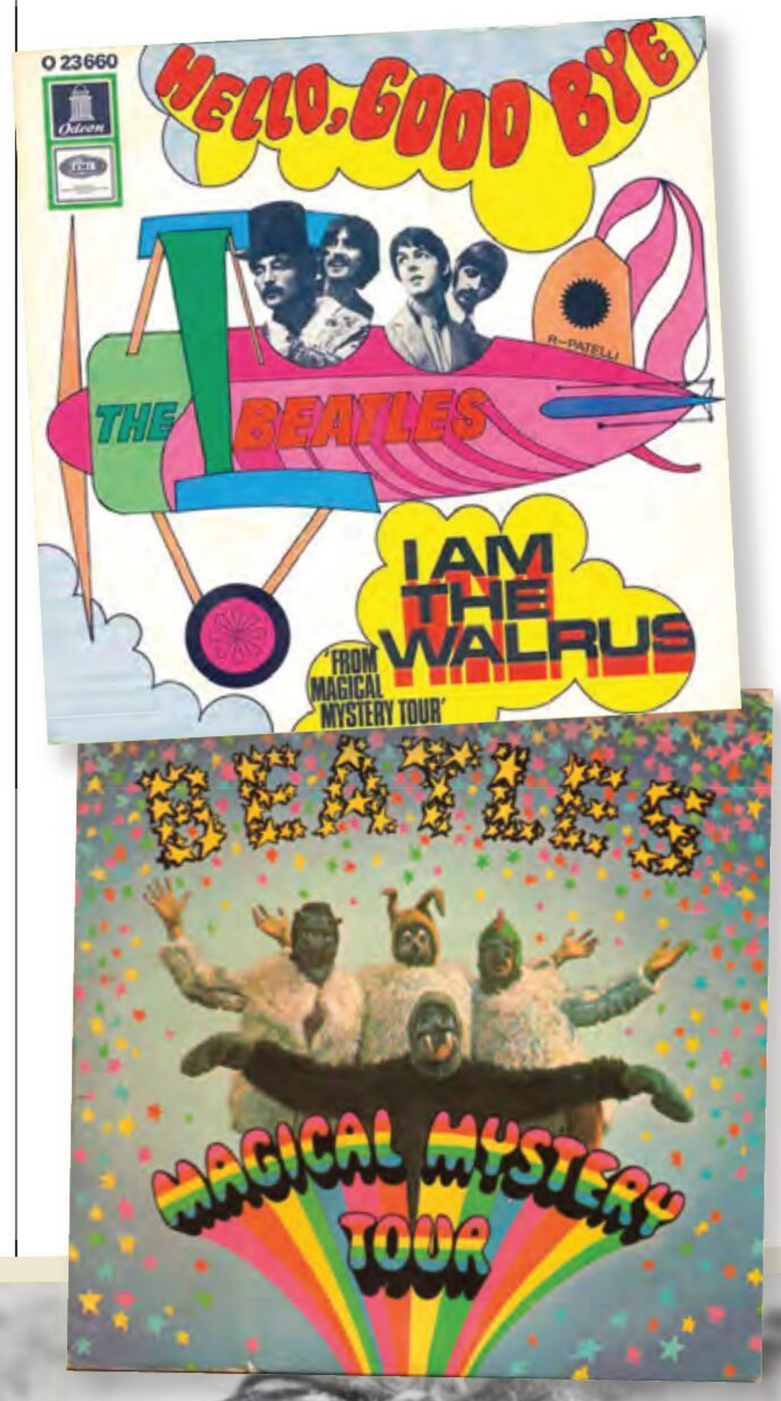
George, can you tell where The Beatles are at musically today? What are you trying to do?
"Nothing. We're not trying to do anything. This is the big joke. It's all Cosmic Joke 43. Everyone gets our records and says 'Wonder how they thought of that?' or 'Wonder what they're planning next?' or whatever they do say. But we don't plan anything. We don't do anything. All we do is just keep on being ourselves. It just comes out. It's The Beatles.

"All any of us are trying to do now is get as much peace and love as possible. Love will never be played out, because you can't play out the truth. Whatever I say can be taken a million different ways depending on how screwed up the reader is.

"But The Beatles is just a hobby, really... it's just doing it on its own. We don't even have to think about it. The songs write themselves. It just all works out. Everything that we're taking into our minds and trying to learn or find out – and I feel personally it's such a lot, there's so much to get in – and yet the output coming out the back end is still so much smaller than what you're putting in. Everything is relative to everything else. We know that now.

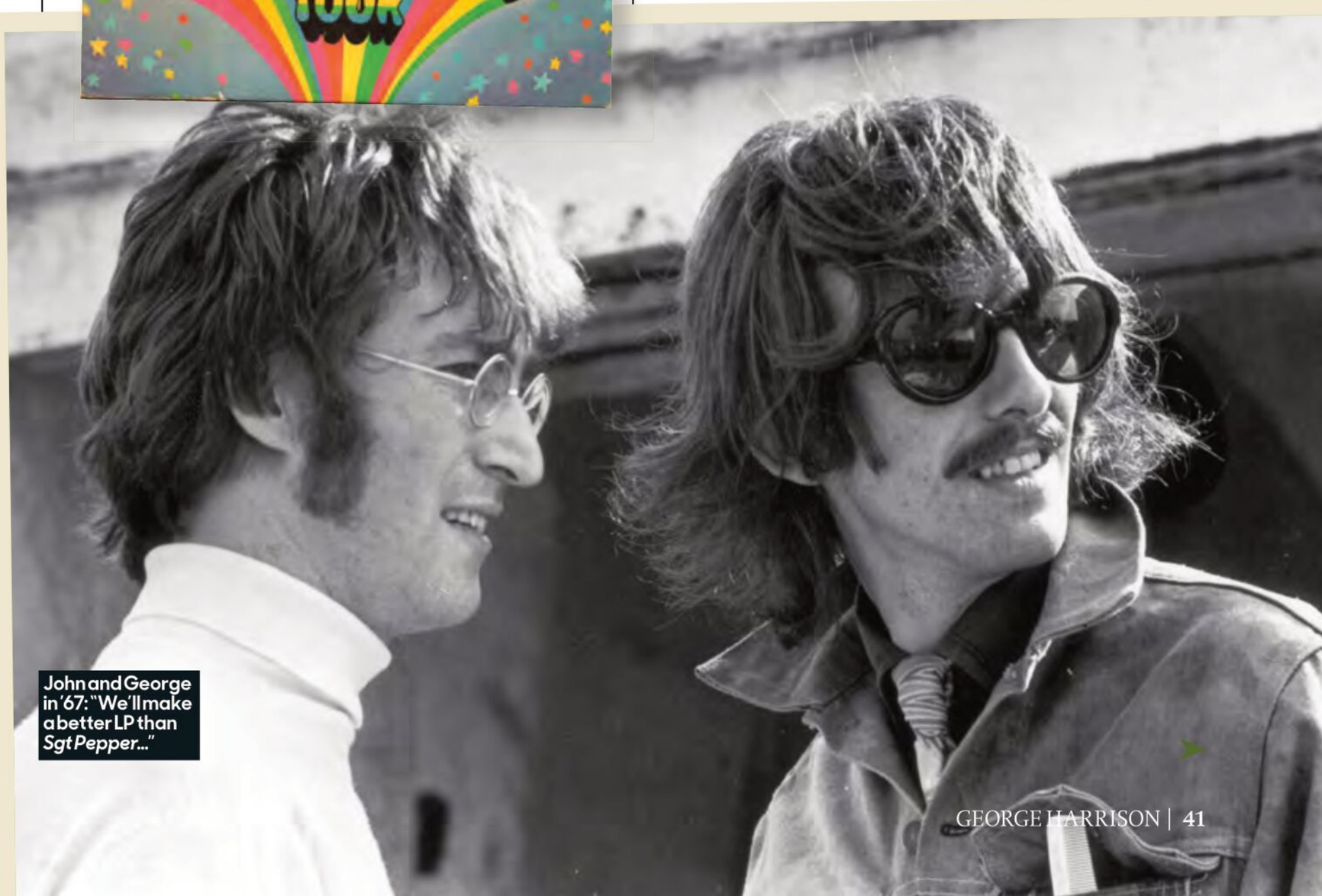
"So we've got to a point where when people say 'There's nothing else you can do', we know that's only from where they are. They look up and think we can't do any more, but when you're up there you see you haven't started.

"Take Ravi Shankar, who is so brilliant. With pop music, the more you listen to it, the more you get to know it, the more you pace through it and the less satisfaction it gives you, whereas Indian music and Ravi Shankar as a person... It's exactly the opposite because the more you're able to understand the music, the more you see there is to appreciate. The more you get back out of it. You can have just one record of Indian music and play it for the rest of your life and you'd probably still never see all the subtleties in it. It's the same with Ravi Shankar. He feels as though he hasn't started and yet he's doing so much, teaching so many people, writing film music, everything."



Have you any idea what The Beatles will do next time you go into the recording studios?
"No idea. We won't know until we do it. We're naturally influenced by everything that's going on around us. If you weren't influenced, you wouldn't be able to do anything. That's all anything is, an influence from one person to another. We'll write songs and go into the studios and record them and we'll try and make them good. We'll make a better LP than *Sgt Pepper*. But I don't know what it's going to be."

KEYSTONE FEATURES/GETTY IMAGES



John and George in '67: "We'll make a better LP than *Sgt Pepper*..."

18+

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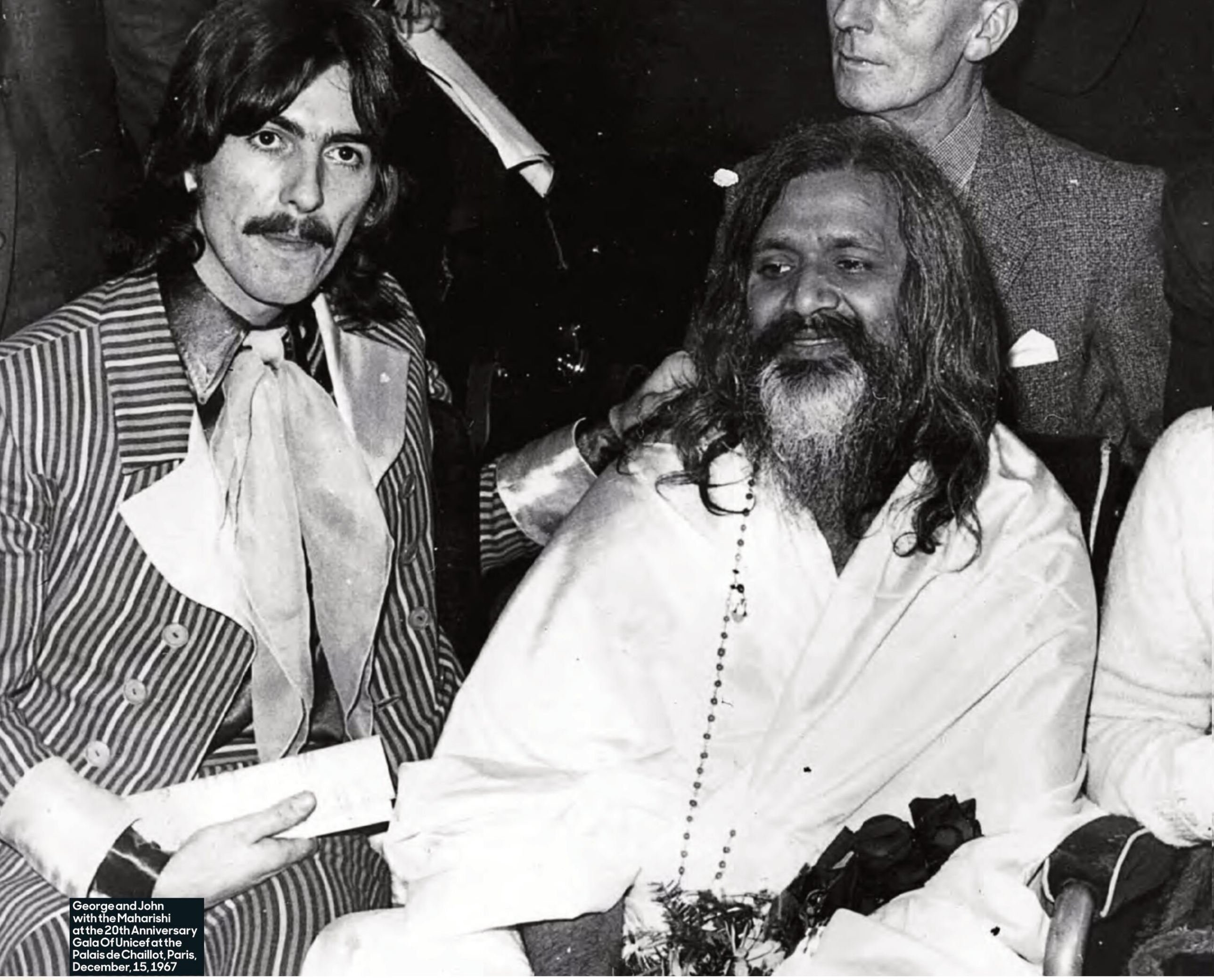


George and John with the Maharishi at the 20th Anniversary Gala Of Unicef at the Palais de Chaillot, Paris, December, 15, 1967

KEYSTONE/GETTY IMAGES

If you had a child, do you know what you would try to do as a father?
"I haven't, and I can't really know what I'd do. But I know I wouldn't let it go to school. I'm not letting fascist teachers put things into the child's head. I'd get an Indian guru to teach him – and me, too."

I believe The Beatles are thinking about making a film in which you create the visual as well as the sound and music?
"Yes. We've got to the point now where we've found out that if you rely on other people, things never work out. This may sound conceited but it's not. It's just what happens. The things that we've decided ourselves and that we've gone ahead and done ourselves have always worked out right – or at least satisfactorily – whereas the moment you get involved with other people, it goes wrong.

"It's like a record company. You hand them the whole LP and the sleeve and everything there on a plate. All they've got to do is print it. Then all the crap starts: 'You can't have that' and 'You don't do this' and we get so involved with trivial little things that it all starts deteriorating around us.

"And it's the same with a film. The more involved we get with film people, the less of a Beatles film it's going to be. Take that *Our World* television show. We were trying to make it into a recording session and a good time and the BBC were trying to make it into a television show. It's a constant struggle to get ourselves across through all these other people, all hassling.

In the end it'll be best if we write the music, write the visual and the script, film it, edit it, do everything ourselves. But then it's such a hell of a job that you have to get involved, and that means you couldn't do other things. But we'll have to get other people to do things because we can't give that much time to just a film, because it's only a film and there are more important things in life."

Do you think the film will come off in the near future?
"Yes. I think it'll probably all happen next year sometime." ***ALAN WALSH***

MELODY MAKER 16|12|67

FOR many people, The Beatles have long passed the stage where they are merely a pop group. The first indication of this development was probably when George Harrison began to take an interest in Indian music and consequently Indian culture. It was George who introduced John, Paul and Ringo to the Maharishi and it is George's passion for his teaching that affects almost all Beatle thinking at the moment.

In this exclusive *Melody Maker* interview, conducted by Nick Jones, George dwells on his newfound philosophy of life; how he arrived at it; what it means to him; and what it will mean to the directions The Beatles are now taking. Music hardly entered the conversation – but then, The Beatles are much more than music alone now.

The Maharishi Mahesh Yogi is already being criticised, as are The Beatles, in connection with your studies in transcendental meditation...
"It's easier to criticise somebody than to see yourself. We had got to the point where we were looking for somebody like the Maharishi, and then there he was. Most other people had never thought about this before and suddenly there he is being thrust down their necks."
You didn't just suddenly get onto a meditation "kick"?
"No, it's been about three years thinking, looking for why we're here – the purpose of what we're doing here on this world, getting born and dying. Normally people don't think about it and then they just die – and then they've gone and missed it – because we do come here for some purpose.

"And I've found out that the reason we come here is to get back to that thing God had, whatever you might call God, you know, that scene.

The thing is everybody is potentially divine, every human being is potentially a Christ."

So you all were in this scene before the Maharishi and all the publicity came along?

"Yeah. When you're young you get taken to church by your parents and you get pushed into religion in school. They're trying to put something into your mind. But it's wrong, you know. Obviously, because nobody goes to church and nobody believes in God. Why? Because religious teachers don't know what they're teaching. They haven't interpreted the Bible as it was intended.

"This is the thing that led me into the Indian scene, that I didn't really believe in God as I'd been taught it. It was just like something out of a science-fiction novel.

"I think it was really after acid, because acid was the big sort of psychological reaction. It's really only after acid that it pushes home to you that you're only little – really. And there's all that infinity out there and there's something doing it, you know.

"It's not just that it's us doing it or the Queen doing it, but that it's some great power that's doing it.

"Then the music – Indian music just seemed to have something very spiritual for me and it became a stepping stone for me to find out about a whole lot of other things. Finding out all about Hinduism and all those sort of religions made me realise that Christianity is that as well – every religion is just the same scene, really.

"For Christianity, it's the people who profess to be the religious teachers who screw the whole thing up. They're the people who create the sectarianism, the prejudices and the hate that goes on. You know, those people who are supposed to be propagating the Lord's word – they're screwing it all up.

"You're taught to just have faith, you don't have to worry about it, just believe what we're telling you. And this is what makes the Indian one such a groove for me and I'm sure for a lot of other people, because over there they say, 'Don't believe in anything... If there's a God we must see him, if there's a soul we must perceive it and so on.'

"It's better to be an outspoken atheist than a hypocrite, so their whole teaching is don't believe in nothing until you've witnessed it for yourself. I really feel and believe very much in this whole sort of scene, you know, God. You know when you say the word 'God' people are going to curl up and cringe – they all interpret it in a different way.

"The Maharishi is a monk and he hasn't got a penny, and he doesn't want to have a penny. He doesn't want any money and obviously you get the press saying he's staying in the Hilton and he does this and he does that – but in actual fact he didn't stay in the Hilton but in a meditator's house.

"And he's been here for nine years, and for eight of those years he never had a word said or written about him until The Beatles got interested in it, and then he gets all this.

"So we know where the press are at and all those people who are putting him down – because they're only writing about him because of us."

But how do these realisations fit into your actual everyday existence? You're saying that everything really is predestined?

"Well, yes. This is what the Maharishi says. The more you meditate and the more you harmonise with life in general then the more nature supports you. Nature has supported you since you were born if you come to think about it.

"When I met Ravi Shankar, it felt like I'd known him for a thousand years"
GEORGE HARRISON

"I mean, why did I go to that school at that time, and meet that fella, who met this fella, and we did this, you know, why?

"Why did I meet Ravi Shankar? And the difference between the thing of me meeting Shankar is that people will see this from their point of view, but actually it's much different.

"When I met him and got to know him, it was like I'd known him for a thousand years – and the same response back from him.

"The more I've got into it, the more you find out about the truth, then the more you see this thing we call reality isn't reality at all – this is all an illusion.

"And this is the big drag because everybody lives their lives thinking this is reality and then say to people like us, 'Oh, you're just escaping from reality.'

"They seriously term this scene of waking up, going out to work, going home again, going to sleep, dreaming, waking up again and all that – reality! But in actual fact you're into illusion – it's nothing to do with reality because reality is God alone. Everything else is illusion.

"Those people in the Himalayas, the Yogi who are very advanced spiritually, and all the ones on other planets, well it's just a joke to them all this that we do and call reality. I mean it's even a joke if you just take yourself out of it and watch all the things going on.

"It's a joke. And the joke's on all the people who take it seriously. There's so much more to it. You see every so often somebody comes to the Earth, like Jesus did, and they've been coming every so often, these people, divine incarnation, like Buddha, Jesus, and all that.

"There's always these people coming and they are the truth, like God, this great force whatever it is, manifesting itself into a physical form.

"And there are quite a few people walking around on Earth this minute who have attained that – all over the world, in the Himalayas, in America, everywhere – and they just look like funny little old men. I mean, like Maharishi, they look like that.

"People of course don't take much notice of them or put 'em down, when all these people are doing is telling the truth – they're always there.

"I read somewhere that the next fella like that, the next Messiah like, he'll come and he'll just be too much. Anybody who doesn't believe that he's the one then he'll just show 'em, you know. He's just gonna come down and zap them all.

"Miracles, like. That's why this whole thing is getting better and better. It's building up to a great peak. It's the cycle moving on. The majority of people are going to believe and they'll be digging everything and he'll come and say, 'Yeah baby, that's right', and all those other people who are bastards they're gonna get something else. Instead when they die they won't reincarnate on this Earth, they'll get put down on another planet that's still got to come through the evolutionary thousands of years that we've just been through. It's just fantastic, you know.

"Really it's all too much, because everybody who's becoming involved and realises it is part of the plot.

"I don't like to use the word 'religious', but when you get into whatever that is, that scene, when you go through yoga and meditation it's just... self-realisation.

"And the next world that's coming along is going to bring us into this age that's known as the Golden Age.

"You know that scene about the Iron Age, the Stone Age, the Ice Age, and that's this thing of evolution, the cycles that it goes through – and the Golden Age is when everything is really nice. A pleasure to be here." ॐ ***NICK JONES***

GEORGE SOLO

WONDERWALL MUSIC

RELEASED 01|11|68

Built between London and Bombay, the first Beatle solo album spans cultures and encapsulates '68's mystical free-for-all.

BY JON DALE

IT seems almost too perfect that the first solo album by a Beatle would be an intercontinental trip designed as a soundtrack to a psychedelic film. And what's more, one by Joe Massot, who would go on to make Led Zeppelin's *The Song Remains The Same* (with Peter Clifton) – and starring Gainsbourg foil Jane Birkin, Dutch performance and design collective The Fool, and leading Samuel Beckett interpreter Jack MacGowran. What a motley crew, right?

If the film's narrative – about a scientist spying on his neighbours through holes in the wall – oscillates between quaint and slightly creepy, well, the very possibility of the film, its collection of odd souls and pop stars, its cast and crew, speaks volumes about the hyperactive, "everything is permitted" climate of its cultural times. Recorded across 1967 and 1968, with mysticism and altered states in the air, *Wonderwall Music* is a beguiling, charming snapshot of a moment in time, and often we can find out the most about feverish times through the marginalia, the experiments and ephemera that seemed to slip through the cracks.

That *Wonderwall Music* plays out as an LP of two distinct halves is in part down to its recording conditions. Harrison split its sessions across continents. Some of it was cut in London, where Harrison brought in Beatles (Ringo Starr, as "Richie Snare"), Beatle friends (Eric Clapton, as "Eddie Clayton"), and old pals – the backing band for much of these sessions were old Beatles contemporaries from Liverpool, The Remo Four, who were managed, fortuitously, by Brian Epstein. (Two members of The Remo Four had shared a classroom with Paul McCartney.)

CRITICS' VERDICT

"Heavily Indian-influenced music written, arranged and produced by George for the film. Much of the music fails to have much point away from the pictures."
MM, December 14, 1968

The rest of the music was recorded in Bombay. By now, Harrison's fascination with Indian classical music had been manifest – the "Within You Without You" sessions, with members of London's Asian Music Circle, made good the promise of the previous year's sitar lessons with Ravi Shankar. Harrison's decamping for *Wonderwall Music* would prove to be one of his most intensive immersions in Indian classical music; in early January 1968, he set up at HMV Studios, accompanied by players for shehnai, tar shehnai, sitar, surbahar pakavaj and tabla – each selected by Shambhu Das from the Kinnara School Of Music, an educational institution founded by Shankar.

The local musicians, allegedly, drew no small amount of fascination from this new rapprochement with western conceptions of harmony. For his part, Harrison extracted some luxuriant, slowly revolving playing from the musicians, and it's these parts of the LP that are most compelling. Given that Indian classical music lends itself to extension, the raga slowly developing through dedicated, infinitesimally detailed improvisations around a core 'mode', the demands of film soundtracks – non-diegetic music that drops in and out of earshot, providing background mood, heightening drama, motifs manifesting piecemeal across the span of a 90-minute cinematic experiment – would seem to sit at cross-purposes to this. Harrison's skill, here, was somehow capturing an essence, and condensing it to the fleeting, the elemental.

Excerpts like "Guru Vandana", a huffing, juddering broadcast for the double reed instrument, the shehnai, or the album's opener, the inwardly spiralling, intimately expansive

TRACKMARKS

1. Microbes ★★★★
2. Red Lady Too ★★★★
3. Tabla And Pakavaj ★★★★
4. In The Park ★★★★
5. Drilling A Home ★★★
6. Guru Vandana ★★★★
7. Greasy Legs ★★★
8. Ski-ing ★★★★
9. Gat Kirwani ★★★
10. Dream Scene ★★★★
11. Party Seacombe ★★★
12. Love Scene ★★★★
13. Crying ★★★
14. Cowboy Music ★★★
15. Fantasy Sequins ★★★★
16. On The Bed ★★★★
17. Glass Box ★★★★
18. Wonderwall To Be Here ★★★
19. Singing Om ★★★

Recorded: EMI Studios, London; De Lane Lea Studios, London; HMV Studios, Bombay
Produced: George Harrison
Label: Apple
Personnel: George Harrison (piano, Mellotron, guitars, tape loops, arrs), John Barham (piano, flugelhorn, harmonium, arrs), Tony Ashton (tack piano, organ, Mellotron, piano, harmonium), Colin Manley (guitars, steel guitar), Philip Rogers (bass), Roy Dyke (drums), Tommy Reilly (harmonica), Eric Clapton (electric guitar), Ringo Starr (drums), Big Jim Sullivan (bass), Aashish Khan (sarod), Mahapurush Misra (tabla, pakhavaj), Sharad Kumar, Hanuman Jadev (shehnai), Vinayak Vora (tar shehnai); Shambhu Das (sitar), Indranil Bhattacharya (sitar), Shankar Ghosh (tabla), Chandrashekhar Naringrekar (surbahar), Shivkumar Sharma (santoor), SR Kenkare (bansuri), Rijram Desad (harmonium, tabla tarang)
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 49

"Microbes", are curious, compelling things, and there's something elusive about them – they seem to slip out of your grasp, just as you've fixed onto their core. And while, in retrospect, it can be hard to hear these pieces without some kind of associative visions of kaftaned hippies in London flats trying to access the easy sublime, Harrison's quest, his deep investment in Hindustani and Carnatic traditions, always felt far more integrated, far more an intensive research project – *Wonderwall Music*, and his other ventures into Indian classical music, sometimes feel like reports from an ongoing search.

The London sessions seemed to be more about a grab-bag of moods – along with a few more explorations of Indian classical music, there's the seaside, tack piano melancholia of "Red Lady Too"; the nostalgic chuckle that is "Drilling A Home"'s honky-tonk, ragtime broadsides, the tape speeding up and down as though time is violating its own conditions – the rainstorm that cracks the song in two further distances it from the now; it's an object lesson in fabricated nostalgia. There's the lovely, happy-sad psychedelia of "On The Bed", and the languid, clip-clopping lift from "Silent Night" that is "Cowboy Music", accordion and slide swooning around the corners of a song that's managed to pre-date that whole 'psychedelic country' movement by years.

Towering above it all, though, is the three-minute psych-rock blast that is "Ski-ing". The guitar here is so razor-sharp it's as though the amps have acid reflux; the rhythm section is caught in a monotonous, wonderfully moronic eternity; the dense, depth-charged purr of the tambura undergirds the whole thing with a see-sawing sense of surrealism. Elsewhere, Harrison flies in tape loops, edits together drone sequences, spools everything backwards, winds a police siren around a blasting harmonica, and generally treats the studio, and its developing panoply of equipment, as the playground it so rightly is.

Wonderwall Music has proven a rather elusive beast, over the years. It's not a likely album to turn up in the vinyl racks, and its reissue life has been rather sporadic, at least until its 2014 remastered reissue on CD (it has also recently reappeared, on super-high-material CD, in Japan). None of this speaks to the quality of the LP, however. Indeed, its historical significance moves way beyond its usual reception as the Marco Polo of Beatle solo albums. The first LP released on their Apple imprint, it seems somehow emblematic of the freedoms the group members were feeling, even if the wheels were beginning to fall off the collective cart. It's also an album whose experimentalism is cloaked in a velvet glove – there's plenty of wild music here, but Harrison was able to get that across in bite-size pieces.

That, surely, is in keeping with soundtrack cues – its structure is down to the conditions of production – but it also has the side-effect of keeping *Wonderwall Music* moving, a tantalising set of mini-essays. It's also one of the first records to really bring Indian classical music into pop and rock, across the entire narrative of an album – so it's no surprise to read that Harrison, later, treated the album as an "assignment", using it "as an excuse for a musical anthology to help spread the word". And while it may not have been a huge commercial success, in its own, quiet way, it's a pioneering album. It deserves more than simply being a footnote to an Oasis song. ॐ

“I’m a rocker again!”

Now over the Maharishi – and the sitar, sort of – George goes back to basics. He rocks out with old pal Jackie Lomax, and daydreams a little: about producing Elvis, and a time when The Beatles might just plug in and *play* again...

BILL ZYGMANT/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

NME 01|06|1968

CLEAR smile. Open eyes. Tapestry jacket. White wine. Arm affectionately around his ever-attractive wife, occasionally drawing her close for a photograph... letting her go... sitting on the edge of a hard-backed chair in earnest conversation with an earnest John Lennon.

The room rumbles with chat at the movement of guests looking around for famous faces, and dancing along a piece of clear floor space is a male model in an orange shirt and a coloured scarf to match.

This is the George Harrison of late May 1968, sitting against the background of a Chelsea reception at the weekend, far from the Indian scene and all the trappings of life with the Guru.

The occasion is a launching party for Apple Tailoring, a new Beatles venture in the King’s Road, featuring men’s and women’s clothing designed by a Beatles friend, John Crittle. Explains George: “We bought a few things from him, and the next thing I knew, we owned the place!”

The conversation moves briefly on to some happy chat between George and a friend about them designing a flower-covered dustbin.

Then we talk.

Says George: “We’re still involved in a hectic recording scene at the moment, although I’ve spent this week at the office. All that paperwork.

“There’s about 35 songs we’ve got already, and a few of them are mine. God knows which one will be the next single. You never know, not ’til you go right through them. I suppose we’ve got a vague idea of the overall conception of the kind of album we want to do, but it takes time to work out.

“We could do a double album, I suppose... or maybe a triple album. There’s enough stuff there.”

I tell George I hate to bring up the topic, but...

“Yeah, I know,” he smiles, “what about the Maharishi?”

“The thing is, we just went off him. I’m not against spreading the word of meditation – I still believe in it as deeply as I ever did – but he started to go about it the wrong way and make the ➤

Harrison at the Arethusa restaurant in Chelsea toasting the opening of the Apple Tailoring Shop, May 22, 1968

whole thing seem a drag. That Beach Boys thing, for instance..."

George is almost obsessively sincere about meditation, in spite of his obvious letdown Yogi-wise. And it's given him almost that look of holy inner calm (together with a nice, mellow sense of humour) that wouldn't disgrace the most devout of monks.

I'm not sure whether it's done anything at all for John. He still looks like the old gum-chewing 'ard case to me. And the way he always seems ready to clobber his enemies, with a few well-chosen words of vitriol, still frightens me off the way it used to. Maybe I'm the one who needs the meditation.

NME 21|09|1968

THROUGH rain, tempest and flood, George ("Hey Jude" is at No 1) Harrison drove up to London this week to join his mate Jackie Lomax for a cuppa tea and a chat. I sat with them in the new Apple offices in Savile Row, in comfort and style beneath the white angels and the cherubs frolicking on the ceiling in Georgian splendour. And as we talked, our chairs sank deep into the green Wilton that stretched miles towards the vast white walls of the beautiful room. It was all very posh and awe-inspiring, and had I not been in the company of such normal people I suspect I might easily have succumbed to illusions of grandeur, complaining about the terrible servant problem one gets in London these days.

We talked mainly around the theme of "Sour Milk Sea", that boom-boom kick-in-the-stomach rocker which George wrote and produced and which Jackie sings on his Apple single released two or three weeks ago. The idea of them getting together emerged somewhere around 1963, but The Beatles suddenly had a few other matters to attend to. Jackie left The Undertakers, kicked around, went to America and came back again, and only now are he and George getting the time to work out ideas.

I told George it had been a bit of a surprise to find him writing and producing this big rocking number, considering the aura of Indian influence he'd built up over the last couple of years. Was it a deliberate attempt to smash his image?

George: "This is the problem; you see, I've got my *Wonderwall* album coming out in a couple of weeks, and that's very Indian-influenced. But the thing with that is, I recorded it in December of last year and January 1968. I still like it, I still think it's very good. But it's not me. I'm back to being a rocker now... for a bit, at least!

"You go through so many changes and realisations, and so often you come right back to where you started. I've realised another thing – that you can write a melody and it can be absolutely anything you like. It can become a jazz song, a folk song, a rock'n'roll song – it can be anything. It just depends how you treat it. For instance, you could sing "Long Tall Sally" very sweet, or you could even do it as an Indian song if you wanted to. It's really a matter of concept.

In 1968 with Jackie Lomax, whose first single for Apple was the Harrison-penned, Maharishi-inspired rocker *Sour Milk Sea*

"I'll tell you one of the things that influenced me in music in the last few months – around June I went to America because I'd promised to do a little part in this film of Ravi Shankar's. And around that time I had my sitar and something happened whereby we never got the flight back from Los Angeles, and we ended up going to New York for two nights. Well, the general influence of the music... just to go to America... it has an effect.

"If I was to go to the States now, this week, I'd pick up something of the vibration of what's going on. What I got over there last time was like the thing of Electric Flag and all that... That's what's going on over there."

I said some people might feel: what was a Beatle doing saying he was still greatly influenced by the pop music of others, when it was generally felt that The Beatles were themselves the Leaders of Influence. George didn't see it that way. Said he: "We are only a collection of all the things we've ever been influenced by. We don't copy, of course. But the feel of the music in the States was heavy, and I happen to like that, and it just happened that when I got to New York there were people there like Jimi Hendrix and all of them and I really like what they're doing. After that I felt: well, to go into one thing, you've got to neglect something else. For me to go into rock'n'roll and become a rock'n'roll guitarist as I want to, I've got to neglect Indian music.

"As for me working on the rock scene with Jackie, our idea is just to do a lot of tracks to see what comes out next. We're mainly doing Jackie's compositions at the moment, not mine. It's a funny thing, but I wrote 'Sour Milk Sea' in Rishikesh in 10 minutes. I didn't have a guitar, but John was always playing it and there was only about 10 minutes or half an hour of an evening when I borrowed his guitar and wrote that song."

"Even though I was in India, I always imagined the song as rock'n'roll. That was the intention." And with sales of "Sour Milk Sea" gathering momentum and Jackie's record looking as if it could do very well for itself if it doesn't watch out – how does George rate its chances?

Answer: "I don't think it's an obvious hit, but I think it's a very good record. The whole thing of it is very good, although I think that, in a way, it goes above the heads of some people. It's not the type of record your mums and dads and all those type of people would buy – like a Mary Hopkin record.

"The thing is, you either have the choice of trying to make a hit, or trying to do what you want to do. And we made that choice. Jackie's whole thing is rock'n'roll, and we both like that heavy, tight sound. We're thinking of all those people who like rock'n'roll music – and there's a hell of a lot of people who just want to hear that boom-boom sort of thing."

Now he's on this rock kick, however, how does George feel about some of his earlier, Indian-influenced work – "The Inner Light", for example? He gives a grin. "That was one of my precocious things. Very precocious, I am – when I get going."

ALAN SMITH

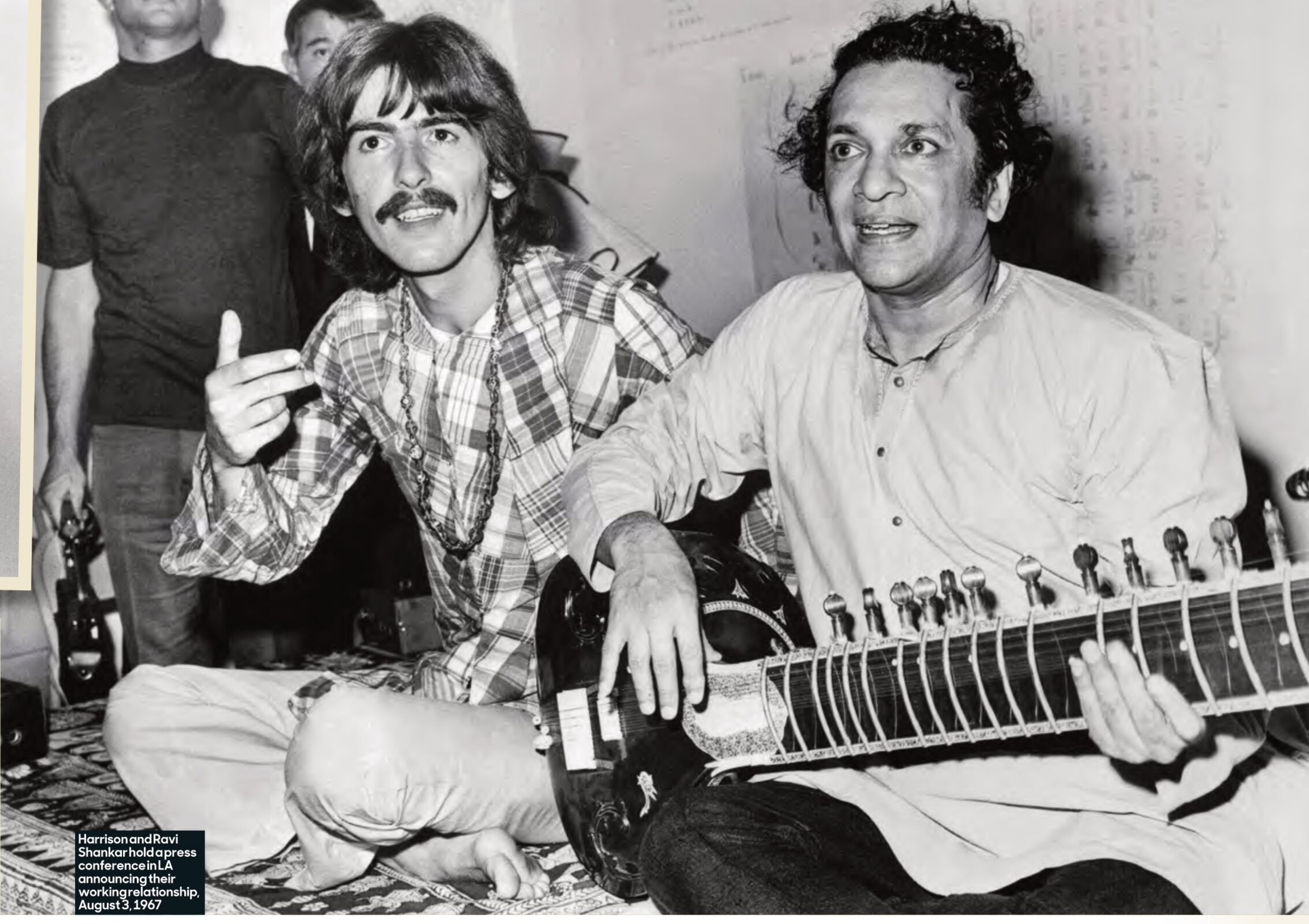
NME 28|09|1968

"RICHARD. Little Richard. That's who I'd love to record. He's a fantastic character with a fantastic voice – and whether he's singing rock or gospel, he's still great."

George Harrison unconsciously tapped his soft shoe in rhythm as he talked, and we both jumped in at the deep end of nostalgia as we chatted about the good old days when El was King and Richard used to tutti-fruit his head off. Extending his 'I'm a Rocker Again' thesis, George said he didn't care to dwell on the 'Mystical Beatle George' any more. "It's still all 'Within You, Without You'," he added, but I don't want to go into that any more, 'cos now I'm being a rock'n'roll star!"

The crooked grin broke into a crooked smile. "I'm still writing, though, and after 'Sour Milk Sea' I've got a few songs I've done on the next Beatles LP. At least, I think they'll be on it. We haven't worked it out yet. I've got a lot of songs kicking about in the

BILL ZYGMANT/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



Harrison and Ravi Shankar hold a press conference in LA announcing their working relationship, August 3, 1967

air, and there's also about two or three I've got at home. But I don't know whether to do 'em or not.

"Sometimes I write them, and with the mood I'm in they're OK. But I come back to 'em later and I'm not in that mood any more, so I think, 'Oh well. Rubbish.' I've been doing that for years! Come to think of it, I've probably thrown away at least 20 good songs which, had I followed them through, would have been at least as good as all the other ones.

"Sometimes I put on a tape at home, and I find there are five bits of songs I wrote around 1954–5–6 or 7, that I just forgot completely about. I've got a song I liked when I first wrote it, and I still like it, but in between I thought, 'Aw, this is a bit too much. People are not gonna believe this!'

"Anyway, I took it out recently, looked at it, and I know they're still not going to get it! The reason is it still tends to have that deep meaning thing – and I'm trying to get out of that. I now want to write songs that don't have any meaning, because I'm a bit fed up with people coming up and saying, 'Hey, what's it all about? What does it mean?'"

I asked George if he got any really creative experience out of writing and recording. He said, "Of course – it's all like a challenge. You get the idea and you've got the bit of plastic to put it on, but then there's the actual thing of going through all that bit of getting musicians together and making people do things the way you want, trying to get the best out of it.

"And then, in the end, when you've done all that, and you've got a little thing there, like a painting... and you put it out... and people say, 'Oh, it's a load of shit, man.'

"But it doesn't matter. Not to me, anyway, because you get a lot of people who do like it, and it is worthwhile."

We got onto the Beatle Fan's Biggest Hope Of All – will The Beatles ever play live again?

Answer from George, with that smile again: "It just depends. The thing I'd like to do most of all is play resident in a club. Not to go touring, because I didn't like all that travelling and playing, and all that sort of thing. But, if we were to do a live show, I'd prefer to do it like at the Top Ten in Hamburg for three months, and just play in the one place for about three months. Then we could get rid of The Myth once and for all of The Beatles being 'something apart' from everybody else.

"Obviously, we go through cycles. At the moment, it's all that bit like getting my guitar out again, and it's happened quite a bit on this next album of The Beatles. We've got 'together' for it. Like, in the early days we were pretty good because we played for so long in one place. That's why I'd like to do a resident spot. Then you've got your amps and your drums set up, and get used to the one sound. All these people come to see you, too, so you can't hide. You can't fake anything. It's like, you know, you've got your trousers down. And there's nothing to hide!

"Now, we're trying to get as funky as we were in the Cavern. 'Cos in the Cavern and Hamburg, all we really were was thump-thump-thump. But so together, you know, because we were playing all the time. And those were the days when we used to think that 'Twist And Shout' was too way-out for a single. All very Shadows it was then, and getting into suits.

"This next album is much simpler than *Pepper* because it's more down to guitars, bass and drums, and maybe a piano. There's a nice one of Paul just playing with his guitar, singing to himself but with just a bit of brass on it."

We got onto the subject of The King and George said: "I remember at school there was all that thing about Elvis. You never really wanted to go to school, you wanted to go out and play or something. So when Elvis's 'Heartbreak Hotel' came out and you had this little bit of plastic... it was amazing. Now, it's hard to realise that there are kids like I was, where the only thing in their life is to get home and play their favourite record, and maybe it's ours.

"We know Elvis is great. We know he is. He stopped being a rocker, and they made him go into the Army, and by the time he came out he was a clean, healthy American doing clean, healthy songs and films. But basically, he's got such a great bluesy voice.

"It would be great if The Beatles and Elvis could get together for an album. It really would." ॐ

ALAN SMITH

"Now, we're trying to get as funky as we were in the Cavern... so together, y'know"

GEORGE HARRISON

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

GEORGE SOLO

ELECTRONIC SOUND

RELEASED 09 05 69

Zapple be the day! George takes a light-hearted view of new developments in synthesisers. BY JIM WIRTH

BERNIE KRAUSE'S lone visit to George Harrison's Surrey hideaway, Kinfauns, did not go well. Dragged over from San Francisco to set up the $15,000 Moog III the Beatle had bought (perhaps in a bid to keep up with early adopters Mick Jagger and George Martin), the Beaver & Krause innovator remembered being kept on hold for days while Harrison recovered from a tonsillectomy. He was then ferried over to Heathrow Airport to convince customs officers that the synthesiser was a musical instrument and not an 'electronic device' (thus saving Apple several thousand pounds in import duties).

Within hours, he was being offered a joint chez Harrison, and invited to listen to what his host called "my first electronic piece, done with a little help from my cats". Disorientated as he was, Krause could not help but notice that the bleepathon – later packaged for release on *Electronic Sound* as the 25-minute "No Time Or Space" – was a surreptitious recording of a Moog III demonstration he had given Harrison while the guitarist was producing a Jackie Lomax album in LA in November 1968.

The sometime Moog sales agent called Harrison out on this pioneering electronic scam, to receive a flustered response. In his autobiography, *Into A Wild Sanctuary*, Krause picked out the following zinger Harrison quotes.

"You're coming on like Jimi Hendrix. When Ravi Shankar comes to my house, he's humble."

"Don't worry. I've edited it, and if it sells I'll send you a couple of quid."

CRITICS' VERDICT

"'No Time Or Space', recorded in California, resembles noises on a building site, air going into tyres, a machine gun fired by a bird, a rude noise here and there, a dentist's high-speed drill – the whole meaning little to me."
Allen Evans, NME, May 17, 1969

"Two compositions are featured: 'Under The Mersey Wall', recorded in England, and 'No Time Or Space', recorded in America and the better of George's excursions into electronic music."
MM, June 7, 1969

"Trust me, I'm a Beatle!"

Krause asked Harrison to call him a cab, and – after silently fulfilling Harrison's unusual request to set up the Moog III to make a sound like bagpipes – stormed off back to America.

One of only two releases on The Beatles' freaky Zapple label – along with John Lennon and Yoko Ono's bleak *Unfinished Music No 2: Life With The Lions – Electronic Sound* is a rock approximation of a Marcel Duchamp readymade. With its release, Harrison slapped his Beatle-y signature on a bunch of half-finished work (some his own, some possibly not) to give Fab Four approval to the latest groovy goings-on in the world of experimental music. The album itself, however – with its 40-odd minutes of disjointed burbles, squelches and whooshes – is the audio equivalent of taking hits from a particularly sonorous bong during an alien invasion.

"No Time Or Space" captures an exhausted Krause in the early hours of the morning running the telephone-exchange sized Moog III through its paces – kicking off with what sounds like a sustained bout of Vogon gunfire before conjuring up a messy approximation of a space storm, the twitter of cosmic birds and enough echoey white noise to make three copies of Can's *Tago Mago*.

Harrison's homemade 19-minute rejoinder, "Under The Mersey Wall" (the title a pun on the *Liverpool Echo* column 'Over The Mersey Wall', written by another George Harrison) is slightly more melodic, but hardly Beatle-ish. The Quiet One teases out Spitfire noise, a sound like a chainsaw revving up and happens on a psychedelic dentist's drill before playing a *Dr Who*

TRACKMARKS

1. Under The Mersey Wall ★★
2. No Time Or Space ★★

Label: Zapple
Produced by George Harrison
Recorded at Sound Recorders Studio, Los Angeles; Kinfauns, Surrey
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 191

approximation of "Three Blind Mice" and then wandering off into a *Clangers*-ish moonscape before knocking the tape off.

For some, *Electronic Sound* is a piece of pioneering freeform exploration; *Melody Maker*'s enthusiastic reviewer certainly liked the cut of the emperor's new clothes, noting: "[*Electronic Sound*] never tries to reproduce sounds produced originally by humans. That is the way [*electronic music*] must go."

However, bewilderment was a more common response, and experts were not impressed. Zapple factotum Barry Miles – who had previously sent all four Beatles copies of Morton Subotnik's *Silver Apples Of The Moon* (1967) as well as avant-classical pieces by Milton Babbitt and Luciano Berio to keep them apprised of the latest electronic trends – felt *Electronic Sound* was a self-indulgent doodle. "It was not the result of much experimentation or research," he wrote in *The Zapple Diaries*. "Had it been by anyone else, we would not have released it, but obviously The Beatles could do anything they wanted."

Explaining the making of the record years later, Harrison held up his hands: "All I did was get that very first Moog synthesiser with the big patch unit and keyboards you could never tune, and I put a microphone into a tape machine. Whatever came out when I fiddled with the knobs went on tape."

Hardened retro-futurists make a case for *Electronic Sound* for just that reason: it is unadulterated Moog, the unexpurgated shock of the new. Apple's press release – penned by Derek Taylor – took a different line, characterising the "pottage of space music" as "environmental sounds that went beyond the genre of hashish cocktail music", a hopeful attempt to posit *Electronic Sound* as a countercultural counterweight to Walter Carlos's contemporary dinner-party classic *Switched-On Bach*.

Electronic Sound... a racket, in fact

However, while *Electronic Music* is not easy listening, it isn't that way-out either. The Silver Apples and The United States Of America both brought harsh electronic noise into left-field rock with their 1968 debut albums, while BBC Radiophonic Workshop boffins Delia Derbyshire, Brian Hodgson and David Vorhaus unleashed a more sophisticated slab of synth-prog with White Noise's VSC3-powered *An Electrical Storm*, released in May 1969. Derbyshire's eminently Google-able 1963 discovery of a prototype version of Warp Records techno further underlines just how unsophisticated *Electronic Sound* was.

Harrison's crudely painted sleeve perhaps acknowledges that. The front cover depicts Krause (with bow tie) fiddling with the Moog III while the artist (bottom centre with the blue face) makes the tea. *Electronic Sound*, similarly, thus casts Harrison as the uptight sorcerer's switched-on apprentice, the Mersey princeling eager to make cutting-edge art, but – for the moment – only able to produce childish, primary-coloured blobs.

His technique would improve – Harrison's Moog III featured on *Abbey Road*'s "Maxwell's Silver Hammer", "I Want You (She's So Heavy)", "Here Comes The Sun" and "Because" – but on *Electronic Sound* he is stretching for avant-garde virtue rather than virtuosity. If the result is rambling pseudo-art, at least somewhere deep inside Harrison knew it – and didn't care. As the mysterious Arthur Wax wrote on the original album's inner sleeve: "There are a lot of people around, making a lot of noise, here's some more." A racket, in fact.

"I wrote 'Here Comes The Sun' in Eric Clapton's garden"

Abbey Road is out, but with 40 unrecorded songs ready, George has more to contribute to The Beatles. As he unveils a Hare Krishna side-project, he also seems to be heading for a new spiritual breakthrough. New pal Bob Dylan, meanwhile, "is very charming".

NME 20|09|69

I JOINED an Apple Records "Magical Mystery" coach tour recently and ended up squatting on the moist grass on a lawn in Sydenham, sheltered from the breeze by the flapping canvas of a marquee which also contained a fully bearded Beatle George; open-mouthed fellow members of the press; and an assortment of seemingly sincere bald-headed gentlemen who cried, "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna," over and over again.

It was quite a day.

The Krishna people mainly had American accents, white faces and Indian robes which tucked up between their legs; and they hopped and sang and ate curried goodies amongst the heady, heavy smell of joss smoke.

The occasion marked the launching of the Apple single of the "Hare Krishna Mantra" by members of the London Radha Krishna Temple, produced by George Harrison. The music is featured in the show *Hair*, and there are now several other singles – but this is the one which comes into the *NME* Chart this week at No 28.

George says he feels he has more in common with followers of the Krishna philosophy than other persuasions. Mainly they were younger people who'd been through different scenes The Beatles had been through, like drugs, until they had transcended them in the search for higher states of consciousness.

"To go to an ordinary Church of England or Roman Catholic church is quite nice," added George, "but they don't show you the way to achieve Christ-consciousness. They tell you all about it, but they don't show you the way. Every man is basically Christ-conscious... but due to the association of the material world, many lose it.

"Actually, I feel more drawn towards Hinduism than anything else. It was through Hinduism that I learned about Christ. Christ was really a yogi."

According to the Krishna Temple's spokesman in Britain – an amiable American who now calls himself Gurudas ("servant of the guru") – the 17 members of the Temple here believe in any public way of spreading their influence. Records are only part of the picture.

He told me this week that they already have plans for a follow-up, and that he believes many of their chants have what it takes to become hits. "They have already lasted thousands of years," he said, "and I would say some of them even have a jazz feeling."

Members of the Temple say they use the Hare Krishna mantra or song (it literally means "Praise God") to start a mental vibration which will give them "pure consciousness" and cleanse all their misgivings.

TALKING about his songwriting on the new Beatles album, *Abbey Road*, and his future plans as a composer, George said: ➤

TRINITY MIRROR/MIRRORPIX/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

George Harrison of The Beatles pictured at Krishna

"I believe that if I'm going to sing songs on record, they might as well be my own. And I also feel you can say more in two minutes of a song than in 10 years.

"The first song I ever wrote was in Bournemouth, and it was 'Don't Bother Me'. It wasn't very good, but I was sick in bed and I thought I might as well write something, and it went on our second album.

"The most difficult thing for me is following Paul's and John's songs. Their earlier songs weren't as good as they are now, though, and they obviously got better and better, and that's what I have to do.

"I've got about 40 tunes I haven't recorded, and some of them I think are quite good. I wrote one called 'The Art Of Dying' three years ago, and at that time I thought it was too far out. But I'm still going to record it.

"I used to have a hang-up about telling John and Paul and Ringo I had a song for the albums, because I felt mentally, at that time, as if I was trying to compete. And in a way, the standard of the songs had to be good, because theirs were very good.

"Another thing is, I don't want The Beatles to be recording rubbish for my sake... just because I wrote it. And on the other hand, I don't want to record rubbish, just because they wrote it. The group comes first.

"It took time for me to get more confidence as a songwriter, and now I don't care if they don't like it. I can shrug it off.

"Another thing with The Beatles is, it's sometimes a matter of whoever pushes hardest gets the most tunes on the album.

"Then, it's down to personalities as whoever's going to push. And more often, I just leave it until somebody would like to do one of my tunes..."

ALAN SMITH

"I don't want The Beatles to record rubbish for my sake... just because I wrote it"

GEORGE HARRISON

NME 01|11|69

1969 will end up being George Harrison's year. He's waited a long time for real recognition, has George, but his composition "Something" is released as a Beatles single this week and it is destined to become a landmark in his acceptance both as an individual and as a songwriter of increasing style.

He was never the personal pusher, but as a well-wishing observer since around 1960 I am happy that the standing-in-the-shadows bit seems at last to be over. As he told me: "I know I'm writing better.

"The fact is, the more you do it – the better it becomes. And I'm doing it a lot. I just get the compulsion... Like the other week, when I suddenly had the desire to write a country-and-western song, and I didn't have any idea of its shape but I just had to do it.

"I just knew, somehow, that there was a song there inside my head. And the big thing was just to get it out.

"Like Donovan said: 'Songs are all around you. Just reach out and capture one.'

"You know, it's nice to talk about music occasionally, and remind people of what we really are. That was one of the big bugs about our previous tours – especially towards the last couple of years – in that we became a political thing. People forgot everything else.

"We couldn't go out on the road just like a pop band... like we were there just to sing a few tunes. It became all this bit about politics, and 'What do you think of President de Gaulle?' and all that.

"That's why it's nice to remind people that we are, basically, primarily musicians. And politicians, and anything else, secondly.

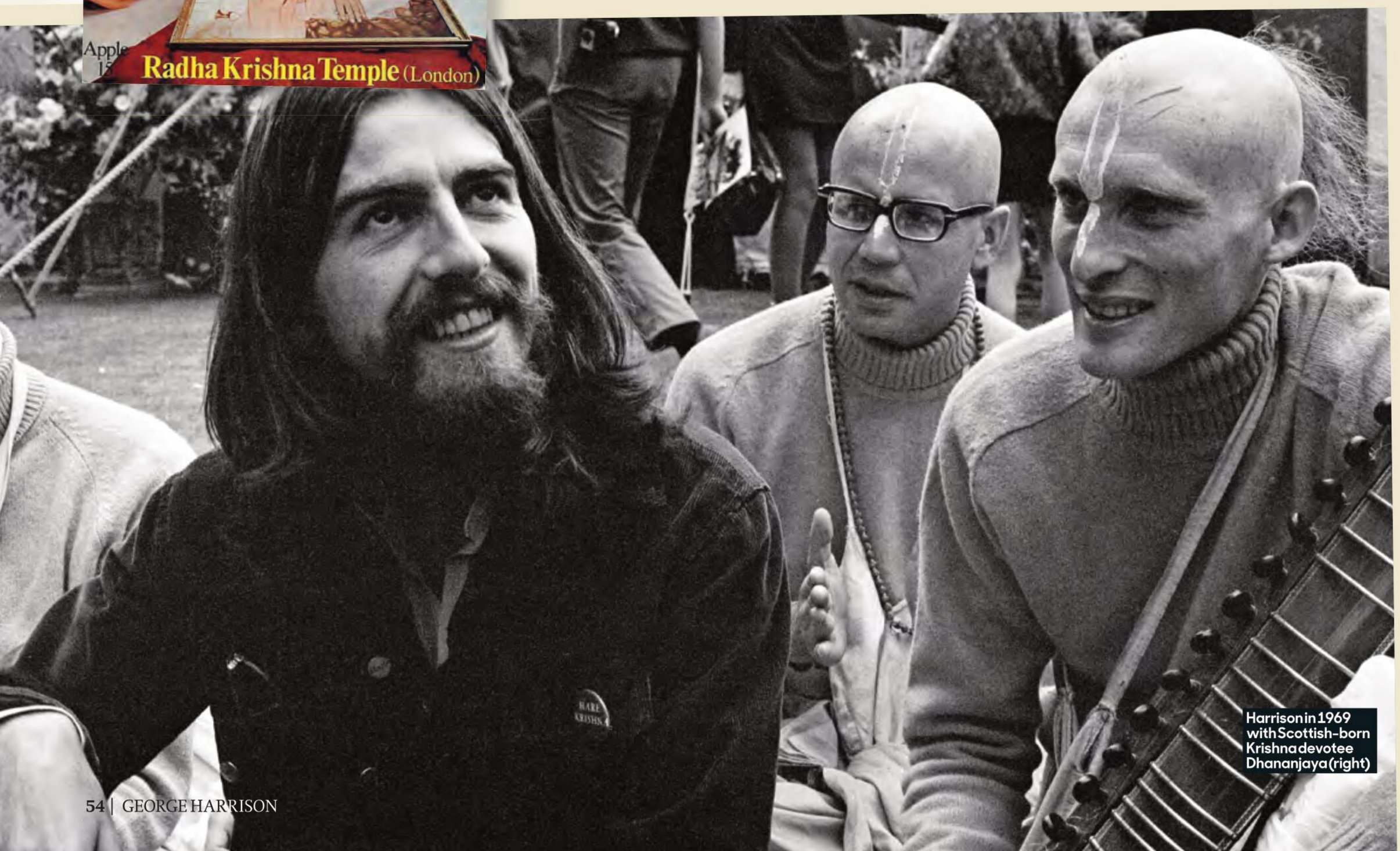
"Some people tell me this 'Something' track is one of the best things I've ever written. I don't know! Maybe they're right, maybe they're wrong. It's very flattering.

"If there's any reason, maybe it's that now I can get over more what I want to do. I like the exercise of songwriting. And I like being stimulated to composing something I hear, or think, or say, or read.

"There was a period – about two years back – when I started believing that the whole universe was one big song. Things people would say... I'd think, 'Hey, that's a song,' and I'd go off and write it.

"I feel it's only a matter of me becoming more aware as a Beatle and as a person. Anybody can do anything if they set their mind to it. I did.

WOLSTENHOLME/DAILY EXPRESS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES, BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES



Harrison in 1969 with Scottish-born Krishna devotee Dhananjaya (right)

Apple core: Harrison, John Lennon and Yoko Ono at The Beatles' London HQ on Savile Row, 1969

"I've said it before, but one of the real reasons I started getting into composing is that I thought: 'Well, if John and Paul can write songs...'

"When I first started at it, I used to forget to keep going and to finish things off. It's like washing your teeth. If you've never washed your teeth before, it takes a bit of time to get into the habit. And then you just do it naturally.

"The hang-up of playing my songs to John and Paul always used to hold me back, as I've said, because I knew how it would sound finished, and I had to try and convince them in one play.

"For that reason, there are a lot of numbers of mine that I decided not to do anything about. It was a shyness – a withdrawal – and I always used to take the easy way out.

"Now? Well, maybe I'm cocky! Because now, I don't care if anybody else likes it. It's a matter of taste. And maybe I don't like some of their songs, either.

"What I still do, though, is to bring out the numbers I think are the easiest to get across. The ones I think will take the shortest time to make an impact... the ones that'll sound the nicest tunes.

"I remember when I came to do a song for the *Abbey Road* LP, I did that one called 'Here Comes The Sun' because it didn't need any real production. I must just go to the loo."

The two-minute break and a cup of tea.

"As I was saying... about the LP. In future we're going to get an equal-rights thing, so we all have as much on the album.

"I also thought of doing an album of my own, mainly just to get rid of all the songs I've got stacked up. I've got such a backlog, and at the rate of doing two or three an album, I'm not even going to get the ones I've done out for three or four years.

"I suppose I'm waiting till I've got myself a proper studio at home. And then I can just knock 'em off when I feel like it.

"It's a bit of a vicious circle, because I don't want to get a studio fitted up until I move, and I've been trying to move for a long time. I'm still in Esher and I've been there for years... the house isn't really big enough to have a proper studio. I've got all sorts of equipment together, but there's hardly any room to move.

"I think at home would be the ideal place for me to record. I hate the hang-up of booking a studio. And I think it's the same with many artists... I'll bet they sing their songs much better at home, where they're completely relaxed.

"I know that if I were doing it like that I'd probably do it more like the Plastic Ono Band, where you just bash away! I know I've got demos of things that went on that Beatles 'White Album' that were much better.

"It's like 'Revolution'. Even though we did two versions of it, I still think the best version is the one I've got at home on tape, which we did just on an Ampex four-track machine with acoustic guitars, and Ringo just bashing on maracas or something in the corner.

"Summing me up, I don't mind admitting that I definitely used to be self-conscious. But now I've got less hang-ups about everything, not just music.

"I wrote 'Here Comes The Sun' in Eric Clapton's garden – name-dropping! – and it was done just about the time we had all those business meetings and I had headaches. So one day I stayed off, didn't come in, and went to Eric's, because it's nice with trees and things. And in that setting, the song just came right out.

"'Something' I wrote towards the end of the double album, about a year ago now. I just got the bit about '*Something in the way she moves*' and then the chord progression seemed to follow naturally. I finished it early this year.

"The words are nothing, really. There are lots of songs like that in my head. I must get them down. Maybe even other people would like to sing them."

MELODY MAKER 22|11|69

"I KNOW many people think we're eccentric and do crazy things. But if they don't understand what we're trying to do, why put it down like that?"

George Harrison was protesting against the intolerance The Beatles often encounter today.

"They should keep an open mind and realise there is a chance that what we're saying and doing could be related directly to them.

"Maybe Joe Public isn't happy about our personal appearance or anything else we're trying to do at the moment. But who is to say that every one of the Joe Publics, put in the same position and schooling of life as we went through, would not be doing the same things?

"I know it can be argued that if people think we're eccentric they won't take what we're trying to do seriously. But that's a chance we have to take.

"It's like with John. Maybe they think he's a lunatic or something. But because he keeps on being the same lunatic, time heals and the public begins to realise he's genuine. And even if we all still think he's a lunatic, at least he's a genuine lunatic.

"All I can say is that there's a purpose to life. Like Shakespeare said: 'All the world's a stage and men and women merely players.' And we in The Beatles are just four of the actors. In the circumstances, all I and the others can do is act out our parts in the way we believe.

"Not that I, or anyone else, can't try to change. I've changed such a lot and I'm going to try and keep changing. Life itself is one constant change. Day and night... everything is always changing.

"Joe Public should realise that in the end, he is probably looking for the same things in life as we are. Somebody who criticises us may, for instance, be the kind of person who would get his happiness out of a new telly or a new car. But what happens to someone who's got a million tellies and a million cars and all the money in the world and a thousand palaces and castles... what happens then?

"He sits there looking for happiness. And it can only come from within – which is the basis of everything I believe in."

Talking about Bob Dylan: "I've been greatly influenced by him, just as I am by all kinds of other people and music. The Beatles often suffer from people misunderstanding them; so does Dylan.

"People don't realise that he has changed quietly; and that he has his wife and family and he's happy. Personally, I find him a really great guy.

"The trouble with the things that've been written about him is that so much attention and pressure have been put on him for the wrong reasons.

"Dylan can't understand why people want to bug him about all kinds of things that aren't to do with his music. He didn't make himself into a cult – the press did. And now he can't understand why people want to ask him silly questions about what to do about Vietnam. Dylan just wants to write songs and sing songs... And if people want to talk to him about his music, he's really very charming."

WOLSTENHOLME/DAILY EXPRESS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

“I love him. It’s like looking at myself”

Swapping *Abbey Road* for the actual road, George finds time during his incognito spot on tour with Delaney & Bonnie to discuss his budding friendship with Eric Clapton, and the bar it raises. “I listen to ‘Something’ and know I could do it better,” he tells ROY CARR

NME 20&27|12|1969

I’VE noticed that on the last couple of Beatle albums your guitar playing has reached a new and thoughtful maturity.

GEORGE HARRISON: “I agree. For a period of time, about two years, I got out of rock’n’roll and became involved with sitar, which I still love.

“I still think that kind of music is transcendental, but I went through a cycle, which finished with me doing a film clip with Ravi Shankar for a film which he made. After that I got into New York and happened to stay at the same hotel as both Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix, and it seemed a natural thing to start getting back into guitar.

“I had known Eric just a little bit before then and it was really through his indirect influence on me that made me want to play a bit more and take much more interest.”

On The Beatles’ current hit “Something” your solo is exceedingly well constructed and builds in its progression. Is this in any way due to Eric’s influence?

GH: “That’s why I’ve always placed Eric Clapton’s guitar higher than others, because it’s quite easy, in a way, to improvise and play things like that, but if you listen to Eric he always takes it somewhere and progresses it, actually resolving it.

“Even if it’s a 12 bar, he’ll make it say something and it will make good sense in that it will resolve itself at the same time. Most people just play lines, and builds, and leave it somewhere, so it doesn’t have as much meaning.

“Eric always makes it a bit more subtle, and that’s one thing I really like about his playing. With ‘Something’ it was just that we kept on playing it over and over until we played it so much, I didn’t know what it was when we made the backing track.

“I came back to it after four months, as we’d been on holiday; and when I listened to it I was quite pleased with it.

“At the time of leaving it you can always try and get it better and better. Even when you make a record that people can say was almost perfect, you’re so dissatisfied with it because you know the further along the line you take it, the further there is to take it and the more subtle it becomes.

“I listen to ‘Something’ now and I could do it a whole lot better now.” ➤

JANPERSSON/REDFERNS

"The vibes are so good": (l-r) Carl Radle, Bobby Keys, George Harrison, Delaney Bramlett, Bonnie Bramlett and Jim Gordon, with Eric Clapton seated, at the Colston Hall in Bristol, December 1969

Now that John has the Plastic Ono Band, would you like to get a bunch of musicians together for "live" gigs?

GH: "Yeah, quite definitely, but I'd like to do it with The Beatles but not on the old scale, that's the only drag.

"With the Ono Band and me playing with Delaney & Bonnie there's no expectations because it's really quite anonymous – you just go and do whatever you can do.

"Once The Beatles are advertised and all the crowds come along, they expect too much. I'd like to do the Beatles thing, but more like Delaney & Bonnie with us augmented with a few more singers, and a few trumpets, saxes, organ and all that."

Are your anonymous appearances with Delaney & Bonnie a kind of musical safety valve, an opportunity to do rare live shows?

GH: "It's just the idea of going to the show as part of the audience and then next minute grabbing my guitar and going with them, it's just the thrill of doing something."

With you and Eric it has become a mutual admiration society. Do you find that both of you are stimulating each other musically?

GH: "Well he's stimulating me. You'll have to ask him about the other one. But I really dig him – I love him – it's like he's just one of those people I get on so well with, it's like looking at myself... a reflection of myself to an extent.

"There are some people you like to see but you don't necessarily like to see them all the time, or that every time you see them you don't necessarily enjoy seeing them.

"With Eric I always have a good time when I see him. If ever I ask him to play on a record for me he always satisfies me, whatever he plays, and it's like there's a good rapport.

"If you count the number of times that I've seen him and the number of times that I've enjoyed myself seeing him, then it's a pretty high average."

I've noticed that Eric seems happier playing with the Plastic Ono Band and Delaney & Bonnie than perhaps with Cream.

GH: "Yes, Eric's the sort of person who needs a kick in the behind because he's basically withdrawn and he's got so much talent, he's not a leader sort of person. It's the same with me – I need someone to encourage me to do things."

[Eric Clapton joins us]

George was just saying that he felt that playing with you has helped to improve his own playing and that you've been a good influence on him. Has this worked both ways?

ERIC CLAPTON: "Yeah... it has the same effect on me. It's just that thing of when you're up there on the stage in front of an audience you gotta get something together, and if you've got friends with you helping you to do it... it's really a great encouragement because everybody wants you to play good, so you play good."

I've noticed that when seeing you play with John and the Plastic Ono Band, and tonight with Delaney & Bonnie, you seem to have more tranquillity about you than towards the end of the Cream era.

EC: "Yeah... we were very worn out by the end of that Cream thing, tired of the image, tired of the music, and tired of touring... The whole thing had sort of worn off."

Do you feel that working with Delaney & Bonnie has eased the pressure?

EC: "I'll tell you the absolute truth, Roy. This is the first tour I've ever been on in my life – and I've been on a good few, I can tell you – where everybody has had a good time. And there are a lot of people on this tour.

"The vibes are so good, you can't go wrong and you learn all the time. I don't want it to stop. I could happily go on with this tour for the rest of my life."

Do you ever plan to go back to the States with them and continue to tour?

EC: "It's very tentative as yet, but we've worked out a few things we are going to do together... Like we are going to do some recording – we've already cut a 'live' one at the Royal Albert Hall the other evening.

"At the same time as we do studio recording we can go out and play a few concerts. I don't know about an actual tour because it's a bit close to this one really... It does wear you out."

On the new Ono LP you play such tunes as "Blue Suede Shoes," "Money" and "Dizzy Miss Lizzy". This is a bit of a departure from your previous scene.

EC: "Well, I've played all these numbers before, maybe once or twice with other groups, so I know them, even though I haven't played them for a long time. It was really refreshing to do them again, because they are very simple and uncomplicated. John and I really love that

WATFORD/MIRRORPIX/MIRRORPIX VIA GETTY IMAGES

music... We weren't sending it up... it wasn't a send-up. That's the kind of music that turned John on initially and it's the same for me.

"In fact I could go on playing 'Money' and 'Dizzy Miss Lizzy' for the rest of my life, because I love it."

Do you feel that way with Cream, and to some extent with Blind Faith, that in the States there was far too much super-hyping and put-downs, not from musicians but certain self-opinionated critics?

EC: "Once you get up there and make a name for yourself you've got to expect to be well and truly hammered and punched on, because many music papers have their Heroes and Villains... It's just luck whether or not you're gonna be either.

"You shouldn't ever take it so seriously that it should affect your life. I think that what I play for is other musicians – first and foremost it is their opinion I'm worried about. If George came up and told me I'm playing something bad, then I'd believe him."

What are your immediate plans apart from a solo album? Can we expect to read that Eric Clapton is going to appear at such-and-such a place on a particular evening?

EC: "I would like to do a few gigs like that, but it's quite a complicated affair because you've got to get your group together and I've never really felt that I could be a leader of a group. I've always felt that I belong much more as just part of a group." [*Eric leaves*]

Do you miss live gigs, George?

GH: "I have done... I always try and play as much as I can on sessions, but it's not the same. It's the idea of being up there not knowing what you're doing in front of a lot of people which is the fun of it.

"I hope that The Beatles will tour again, but it's so difficult, not just to get us together to do it. I just couldn't stand going through all the police and crowds and helicopters into the Shea Stadium and the scene that goes with it.

"It's like Dylan, because I know that he's gone through the cycle where he's getting back into wanting to play."

Certain publications gave front page news that The Beatles together with the Stones, were going to jam with Dylan at the Isle of Wight... What happened?

"I'm sure that it was the promoters of the Isle of Wight that gave that story just to help pull in more people, because Dylan would have been paid a certain amount of money, so they really wanted to make a lot of bread there – you can't blame them.

"But it was all just speculation. Like I played a little with The Band, but not on stage or anything, but while they were rehearsing for that gig. I'm quite friendly with them."

Do you intend to do any solo recordings like John has done with Yoko and the Plastic Ono Band – will there in fact be a George Harrison album?

"Possibly, but not really for the reason that I want to do my own thing; mainly because I've got so many tunes that I'd like to get them out. Then I can go on to new things."

You seem a far more peaceful person than you did, say, three years ago.

"Yes I am."

Do you find that a lot of the pressure is off?

"There's a lot of pressure off here in England, but if it was publicised that I was going to be here then I would have to be in the dressing room instead of having a drink here with you.

"You see, that's the difference between doing something like this gig and the Plastic Ono and appearing as The Beatles."

When I saw John, Eric, and the Ono Band in Toronto, the sound that they got was similar to that of your earlier days.

"Well, it was because they were doing the Cavern tunes... 'Blue Suede Shoes', 'Money' and 'Dizzy Miss Lizzy'."

Another thing I noticed was that the crowd was very well behaved.

"Generally I think pop crowds, especially the bigger they get, the more peaceful they become. To be fair to the British press and police, they did praise the kids at Hyde Park for both the Stones and Blind Faith shows."

Do many of your "friends" sit in on Beatles recording sessions?

"We've done a few things, one where Brian Jones played with us, and it started to get that any friends who were around sat in.

"Eric, in fact, played on a tune of mine, 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps'. If there are any friends around, then they can play."

I've noticed that with the last few Beatles albums, they seem to take more repeated plays before you get into them.

"That's a good point. I'm glad you asked that because it means that it will last longer if you play it more and more and it gets better; because there's a lot of music around that sounds really great and then you play it twice and then you're not interested. I do it myself.

"I've found that The Band's new album is one of those albums that grows on you the more you hear it... It's so nice."

It's become obvious that with each new Beatles album both the writing and performance has greatly matured.

"Well that's life really, you're supposed to get better. It's like the Stones... 'Honky Tonk Women' is musically so good even though it's only three chords, yet it's really so good.

Apple only has a very few artists on its books – would you like to feature more artists?

"Actually, I'd like to have about four acts on Apple who were really great and that's it. I'd like Apple to be The Beatles, Stones, Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton and Delaney & Bonnie and that's it... Who needs anything else?

"Oh yes, I think Billy Preston's very good, and eventually he'll get through to the people."

It seems that some values seem to get distorted nowadays – an act can give a bad performance yet still receive a standing ovation just because they are "in", yet many outstanding artists get overlooked.

"Yeah, it's like Delaney & Bonnie, they've been playing this stuff for a few years, but it's only now that the audiences are getting round to them.

"It's alright playing above an audience's head if you're not interested in an audience; it's better to try and play something really better than the sort of music that they are normally used to and to try and bring them with you. Which is the whole process of evolution, to raise the standard of everything but not to leave anybody behind."

Do you find that since you've mixed and played with these other musicians that you view both your own and Beatle music in a different perspective?

"No, not really, we've always been influenced by anything good around us, or whatever we like rubs off on us, and then the moment we write a song and The Beatles record it, then it becomes a Beatles tune.

"It could be that on some of our tunes we try and imitate somebody else. It's like things in the early days. We recorded 'Twist and Shout', 'You Really Got A Hold On Me', and people thought they were our own songs and that we'd written them.

"If as The Beatles we were to cover, say, Elvis's new record, then it would be like a Beatles record. Even if we tried to copy it note for note we couldn't; that's why we got that sort of sound or whatever they thought it was, the Beatles sound."

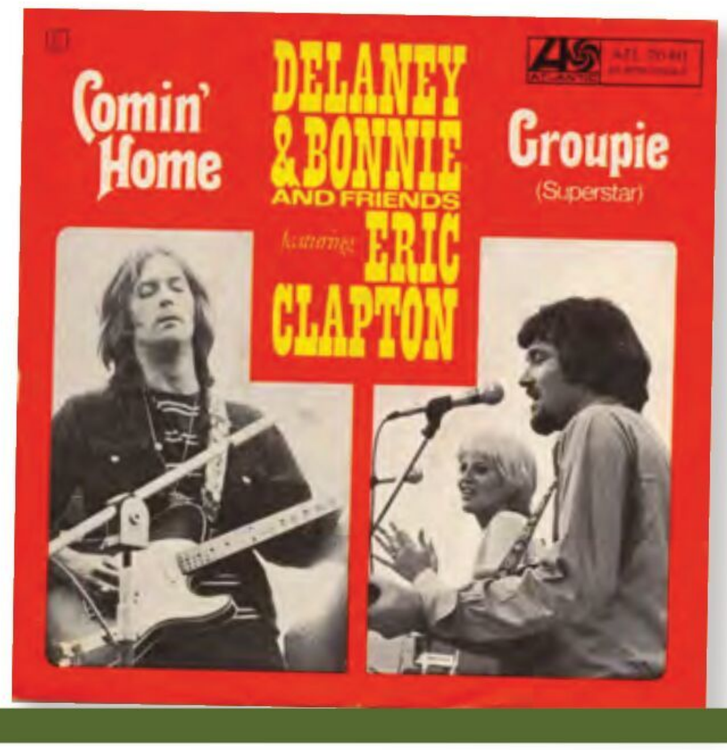
When you are at home listening to records, would you pull out an old Beatles album and play it?

"I think most people who make records go through a period where they don't generally play their own stuff; they'll play it when it's new and then they are usually fed up with it by the time it's released.

"But I may play it after a year or two years. Suddenly one night for some reason, like nostalgia, I may dig out something in particular just to check up, because normally you think, 'Well, that's good,' at that time, but you come back to it two years later just to try and relate with yourself."

Of all the Beatles sides that you've made, is there any particular one that you feel that if you ever played as good as that again you'd be satisfied?

"No, I've never played half as good as I'd like to, but there's been total, like... as a whole there are certain records that I have enjoyed and liked. They all represent a certain time and a certain feeling and to take them out of context..."



"I hope that The Beatles will tour again, but it's so difficult"

GEORGE HARRISON

GEORGE SOLO

ALL THINGS MUST PASS

RELEASED 27|11|70

An ex-Beatle reborn. George loses himself, magnificently, in a crowd of collaborators.

BY TOM PINNOCK

JANUARY 10, 1969, was a busy day for George Harrison. In the morning he attended fractious filmed rehearsals with the other three Beatles at Twickenham Studios for their projected "Get Back" extravaganza; at lunchtime he quit the band with a curt "See you 'round the clubs". Then, that afternoon, while his bandmates jammed with Yoko Ono, Harrison was at home in Esher, spilling his frustrations – especially with the controlling McCartney – into a new song, "Wah-Wah".

Harrison rejoined The Beatles a week later, of course, but he never offered up the acidic "Wah-Wah" for *Abbey Road* or what would become *Let It Be*, and when the band split the song was the first he tackled with producer Phil Spector for his debut post-Beatles LP. "*And I know how sweet life can be,*" he sang, ushering in his new band-less existence, "*if I keep myself free.*"

As The Beatles splintered, Harrison had amassed quite the backlog of songs for his new album. "Isn't It A Pity" was first presented to the band when they were making *Revolver* in 1966, and the minor-key rush of "Art Of Dying" dated from a similar time, while "All Things Must Pass", "Let It Down" and "Hear Me Lord" were all attempted at Twickenham, the latter reportedly without much enthusiasm from his colleagues. Nevertheless, the new songs Harrison was writing were at times joyous, at others tortured, but all sweetly melodic – none of the sour melodies of "Only A Northern Song" or "Blue Jay Way" to spoil the pure milk of enlightenment here – and all ripe for the lush wall-of-sound arrangements that were Spector's forté.

Harrison was in the midst of something of a purple patch – indeed, the whole period from late '68 to mid-1970 was perhaps the most pivotal in his creative life, an 18-month whirlwind of change, destruction and new opportunities that fed straight into *All Things Must Pass*.

In late '68, the guitarist headed to Woodstock to stay with Bob Dylan, and after a tense day or two, the pair bonded, with Harrison teaching Dylan major-seventh chords. These shapes would form the basis of a co-write, "I'd Have You Anytime". Listen to the bootlegged tapes of the *Get Back Twickenham* sessions and you'll hear Harrison continually referencing The Band as The Beatles work on "All Things Must Pass": "We're pretending to be The Band for this one," says Lennon. "Behind That Locked Door", a country lilt written in August '69, addressed Dylan and his reticence to perform, while Harrison decided to cover the songwriter's "If Not For You" after sitting in on a New York session in early 1970.

Soul and gospel were other growing passions: producing an album for Billy Preston inspired the loose, joyous "What Is Life" in the early summer of '69, and a late-'69 tour with his old mate Eric Clapton and Delaney & Bonnie introduced Harrison to the slide guitar. After he jacked up the bridge of his Stratocaster, "Rocky", on Ry Cooder's advice, Harrison found himself to be a natural with his own precise style, informed by the fretless Indian sarod as much as by the blues. Soon he was sliding over every new song with an almost preternatural ability, his long solo on the string-laden "Isn't It A Pity" especially magical.

Harrison's spiritual beliefs had been evident in his songs for a number of years, but they assumed a new prominence on *All Things Must Pass*, whether he was melding Hare Krishna chants with gospel lines in "My Sweet Lord", outlining principles of Zen Buddhism on the title track or laying out the route to freedom (*"chanting the names of the Lord"*, of course) on "Awaiting On You All". In "Hear Me Lord", he apologises to his creator for *"those years when I ignored you"*, while "Let It Down" pits the *"sweetly and divine"* against carnal pleasures.

In early 1970, Harrison moved into Friar Park, a Victorian pile he would live in for the rest of his life, and its eccentric original owner inspired the sweet psychedelia of "Ballad Of Sir Frankie Crisp (Let It Roll)". Other late entries to the LP included "Apple Scruffs", a tribute to the most obsessive Fabs fans, and "Beware Of Darkness", a dusky, bewitched ballad that denounced *"falling swingers"*, *"greedy leaders"* and *"soft shoe shufflers"*.

CRITICS' VERDICT

"Many of the songs are the music of his mind: they search and they wander, as if in the soft rhythms of a dream, and in the end he has set them to words which are often both profound and profoundly beautiful."
Alan Smith, NME, December 5, 1970

"Phil Spector has couched Harrison's untutored but attractive voice in a subtly mixed matrix of instrumentation which has a very mellow feeling, increased by John Barham's complex arrangements for voices, strings and brass."
Richard Williams, MM, December 5, 1970

Wrapped in Spector's cavernous production and boasting an expansive roll-call of musicians, including Eric Clapton, Ringo Starr, Alan White, Bobby Whitlock, Billy Preston, Bobby Keys and Dave Mason, the finished *All Things Must Pass* sounds like a million-dollar fever dream: a dramatic contrast to the intentionally modest *McCartney*, and Lennon's stark, agonised debut, both released the same year. The production has proved divisive (even Harrison regretted it), but the masses of echoed overdubs certainly give these songs a stately, foggy grandeur that's perfect for their themes of cosmic love and earthly disappointment. The finished "Wah-Wah", for instance, is a propulsive masterpiece, the bitterness of the words tempered by the extravagant, exultant arrangement; the first version of "Isn't It A Pity", meanwhile, starts small but expands into epic proportions, even cheekily nodding to "Hey Jude" as it erupts.

Eighteen epic songs still wasn't enough for Harrison, though, who tacked on an extra disc of improvisations, "Apple Jam". Mainly recorded with a proto-Derek & The Dominos, heavy-handed jams like "Out Of The Blue" must have been great fun to whip up, but prove less fun to listen to, and this third disc remains near-mint on most original copies. When this boxed 3LP giant was finally released in November 1970, its 106 minutes were a surprise for some listeners; even "Here Comes The Sun" and "Something" hadn't hinted at the landscapes Harrison could paint on this vast a canvas. Sending folk, soul and spirituality around the world and off into the heavens, *All Things Must Pass* quickly cast its creator as the best-selling and best-loved solo Beatle. As Harrison knew all too well, though, sunrise doesn't last all morning.

TRACKMARKS

1. I'd Have You Anytime ★★★★
2. My Sweet Lord ★★★★
3. Wah-Wah ★★★★★
4. Isn't It A Pity (Version One) ★★★★★
5. What Is Life ★★★★
6. If Not For You ★★★
7. Behind That Locked Door ★★★
8. Let It Down ★★★★
9. Run Of The Mill ★★★
10. Beware Of Darkness ★★★★
11. Apple Scruffs ★★★
12. Ballad Of Sir Frankie Crisp (Let It Roll) ★★★★
13. Awaiting On You All ★★★
14. All Things Must Pass ★★★★★
15. I Dig Love ★★
16. Art Of Dying ★★★
17. Isn't It A Pity (Version Two) ★★★
18. Hear Me Lord ★★★
19. Out Of The Blue ★★
20. It's Johnny's Birthday ★
21. Plug Me In ★★
22. I Remember Jeep ★★
23. Thanks For The Pepperoni ★★

Label: Apple
Produced by: Phil Spector, George Harrison
Recorded at: Apple Studios; Trident; Abbey Road, London
Personnel: George Harrison (vocals, electric and acoustic guitars, dobro, harmonica, Moog, harmonium, backing vocals), Eric Clapton (electric and acoustic guitars, bk vocals), Gary Wright (piano, organ, electric piano), Bobby Whitlock (organ, harmonium, piano, tubular bells, bk vocals), Klaus Voormann (bass guitar, electric guitar), Jim Gordon (drums), Carl Radle (bass guitar), Ringo Starr (drums, percussion), Billy Preston (organ, piano), Jim Price (trumpet, trombone, horn arrangements), Bobby Keys (saxophones), Alan White (drums, vibraphone), Pete Drake (pedal steel), John Barham (orchestral arrangements, choral arrangement, harmonium, vibraphone), Pete Ham, Tom Evans, Joey Molland, Peter Frampton (acoustic guitar), Mike Gibbins (percussion), Dave Mason (electric and acoustic guitars), Tony Ashton, Gary Brooker (piano), Mal Evans (percussion, bk vocals, "Tea And Sympathy"), Ginger Baker (drums), Eddie Klein (bk vocals)
Highest chart position: UK 1; US 1

“We had to find ourselves, individually, one day...”

The Beatles scatter and split, their road through the justice system long and winding. George, meanwhile, heads off to jam with God and ponder his next move – producer, guitarist, trainee guru? “They’re all me, but they’re not really me,” he says, “I’m unlimited...”

NME 14|03|1970

A BEATLE talked to the *NME* this week about the pop sounds of the ’70s. According to George Harrison: “I’m glad people are dropping this word progressive, because most music is progressive anyway! In my own case, I’ve always tried to improve and not go over the same ground again and again.

“Today’s music is getting better all the time, but the tag of underground and progressive in the terms of John Peel – and all those groups he plugs and has on his record label – that’s just a load of crap! There’s no more progression in that than in God-knows-what. There are a lot of good bands who do get put in that bag, but there’s also a lot of pretentiousness. I remember that when The Beatles and Stones became popular, it became the slick thing to then become ‘underground’. But what is underground? It’s like playing electric guitar like Eric Clapton played five years ago, and all that screechy guitar scene. That’s the joke. I’ll say this. If anybody’s in an underground group and really thinks they are underground, that’s a tragedy!

“I like Jethro Tull, and Blodwyn Pig are good. Both of them have got a good measure of originality – and that’s what we want. Originality. So-called underground groups are no more underground than The Beatles are pop.”

Good, guarded and now and again knife-edged vibrations filled the air at the Apple offices a day or so ago. An afternoon of “Govinda” and the Radha Krishna Temple had turned to dusk in the friendship of the press office. Now it was early evening, with music and conversation, George Harrison on the guitar and the defensive Ringo on ad-lib and stomping yeti boots. And for the company and warmth of us all, there sat a hot, snug fire at the top of the echoing empty room. As time passed by we heard the sound of music and ➤

RB/REDFERNS

"I like Jethro Tull, and Blodwyn Pig are good...": George Harrison in 1970

a singing McCartney creeping through from next door, and we jumped up as one and raced across the floor and through the door to the TV, to watch the year-old film of a united Beatles performing "Let It Be" on *Top Of The Pops*.

Then it was back to the hearth and a seat and a view of Ringo's toe-tapping feet, colourfully clad in furry, hairy knee-high boots that bumped up and down to the beat of George Harrison singing a pointedly cynical version of Doris Troy's "Ain't That Cute". Ringo also played tracks from his forthcoming album of golden oldies; among them "Bye Bye Blackbird" and a smooth "Whispering Grass" that could well stand up as a commercial single. Next, guitar-pluckin' George gave a short rendition of a memorable song Ringo has just written called "It Don't Come Easy".

I am happy to report that the *Let It Be* TV film was warmly received by both George and Ringo, and that both of them remain aggressively loyal to the continuation of The Beatles as a unit and as individuals. According to Ringo: "Everything's fine. But I've got things to do, and George has got things to do, and Paul has his solo album to come, and John has his peace thing. We can't do everything at once. Time will tell."

According to George: "Say we've got unity through diversity, because that's what it is – unity through diversity. We still see each other, still make contact. But we had to find ourselves, individually, one day. It was the natural course of events.

"The thing is that so many people think we know all the answers about The Beatles, and we don't. Who are we to say? We can't give the answer, and I for one can't define that special something that made us as we are. I know it wasn't just the records or our concerts. You tell me."

He's a deep and complex person, this George Harrison, and as long as I've known him and as much as I like him, I find it difficult to define the man beneath. The balance within him is fine between love and good and bad and some kind of bitter mistrust of some people, among them members of the press.

George's interest in the principles of the Radha Krishna Temple go considerably further than that of record producer of the Temple's mantras, and his obsession with finding himself still never fails to surprise those who expect only a Beatle and a ready quip. "If there's a God," he told me, "I want to see him. It's pointless to believe in something without proof, and with Krishna, here is a method where you can actually obtain 'God perception'. You can actually see God, and hear Him, play with Him. It might sound crazy, but He is actually there actually with you."

Of his present and future career, George told me: "I think I'll take a break soon, and probably go back to India. Out of the new records, from Apple, I've done "Let It Be" with Paul; "Instant Karma" with John; "Ain't That Cute" for Doris Troy; the record with Jackie Lomax; an album with Billy Preston; the records with Radha Krishna Temple; and now possibly a single with Ringo. And maybe, if I get a chance, I'll get round to doing something for myself! I've almost become a full-time Apple record producer, but I'm going to have to stop. I don't want to be a producer or anything in particular. I don't want to die as 'George Harrison record producer', or 'George Harrison lead guitarist' or even just a Beatle. They're all me, but they're not really me. The moment people start typecasting and then it's time to move on. I'm unlimited. We're all unlimited!"

ALAN SMITH

Hairy Hari: George shortly before the release of his first solo single, "My Sweet Lord", 1970

HULTON DEUTSCHE/GETTY IMAGES

MELODY MAKER 09|05|70

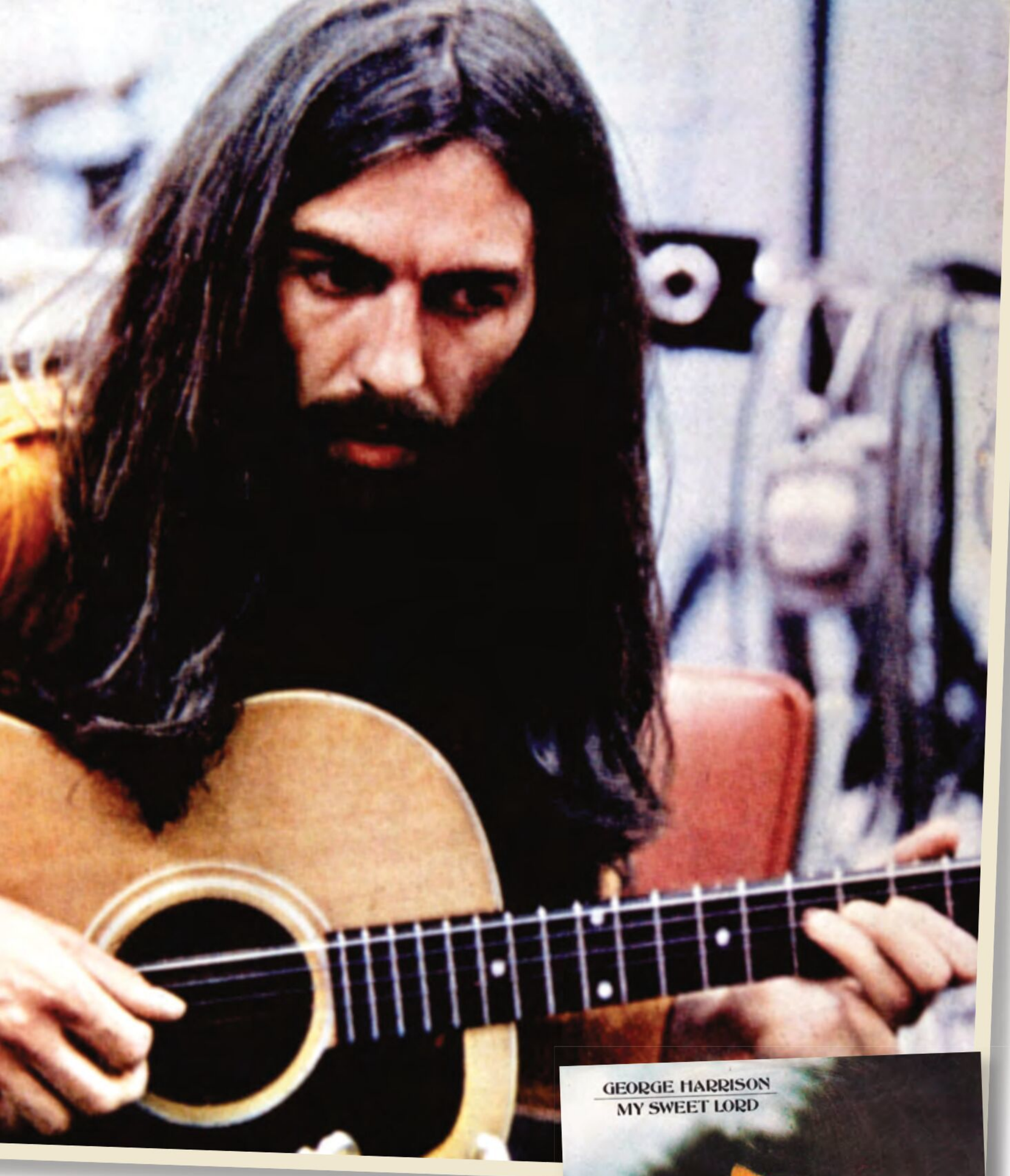
WHEN they appeared and sang it on *Top Of The Pops*, the Radha Krishna Temple's "Govinda" was like a fresh wind blowing in the midst of turgid dishonesty. There they were: a dozen or so people with happiness on their faces, completely unselfconscious, radiating a weird inner strength of the kind which easily unsettles less secure people, even those of a so-called "enlightened" generation.

Gurudas is the name of a kindly American in a wrapped pinky-orange robe who will tell you that during the '50s he was a "beatnik" at a time when the term meant something. He is their spokesman, and articulates their philosophy willingly. If you don't agree with it, you certainly have to admit that it's a good philosophy as philosophies go, and he really does believe in it and act according to it.

"We are merely delivering these sounds," he will tell you. "We are not great, we are not any good, we are not really anything, and we are certainly not better than anybody else. We are merely transmitting these very old songs.

"'Govinda' comes from the rim of the material universe, and from our teacher who is the servant of Krishna, the Godhead. It is the teacher's realisation of

Harrison with Gurudas (in cap) and other devotees from the Radha Krishna Temple in 1970, after recording their Apple single "Govinda" (inset)



his love for Krishna. It's very old, and we learn our songs from scrolls and scriptures delivered from the spiritual entities through our teachers, who can all be traced back to Krishna. It's like taking a piece of fruit on a tree and passing it down from branch to branch until it reaches us. We care for it and pass it down in our turn."

Do they worry or become upset about people who, for financial gain, have made Oriental beliefs and customs fashionable, and have thus debased them?

"Upset is the wrong word. There are two aspects of life: liberation and entanglement, and I care for the people who are entangled. I have a great feeling for all my brothers and sisters who choose to serve themselves.

"There are also four qualities of human life, and one is that we have propensity to cheat each other. Another is using imperfect senses as the end-all. The senses are not the end of everything."

Making records as they do, are they at all bothered about being involved in a commercial scene devoted to making money? It's well known that they put their earnings towards the upkeep and maintenance of their temple, but what about the bread that's creamed off by other people?

"By involving these other people, we help them to serve Krishna," he says, "whether directly or indirectly. If you are going to run into a fire, I wouldn't say to you, 'Come out that fire...'; I'd say, 'Why don't you come over here and do this?' Nothing can deny the service they have already given to Lord Krishna, and their deeds are purified whether they know it or not. Derek [*Taylor*] and George [*Harrison*] are serving directly, for instance; they know it and are happy to do it."

"With Krishna, you can actually see God, and hear Him, play with Him"
GEORGE HARRISON

Do they regard their appearances on TV as useful propaganda for their beliefs, and do they believe that a *Top Of The Pops* spot and their chanting in London's Oxford Street actually influence people for good?

"It does help people. It's like the law of gravity: it was there before we discovered it, and it would still be there, even if we denied its existence.

The purifying aspects of the mantra are there, and if one person sings it, or writes in to tell us that it did him some good, then the whole thing is worthwhile.

"We get the best response from our activities in Oxford Street. Every day people come to our temple and tell us they like our ideas. This grace has been brought in by our teacher for all men."

Krishna is God, and God is Krishna, but do they regard theirs as the only true path?

"What faith is the sun? It shines on America, on Britain, on China, on Catholics, on Hindus, on Anglicans, on Moslems... It has many names, but it shines on everyone. Don't set up cults and sects, but love God purely.

"We ask you to come and dance and chant with us, and if you get tired, come and eat with us. It's simply Krishna consciousness, everything in a joyful way for Krishna. But the purity isn't lost – that's what some people can't understand.

"Our constitutional position is to be in bliss. But our souls are so involved in decaying matter and things that are temporary. People are trying to make temporary settlements, but it's all Krishna's. The material theories of the false theologians are all measuring illusion. They are not the complete knowledge."

Surely, I asked, "practical" people will condemn them instantly because they advocate a state of bliss in which work seems, superficially, to have no place.

"It is the nature of the soul to be active. Some of us have jobs – George is the perfect example. Other people are showing us how to get out: we are working to serve Krishna, so we have a personal relation and end, and we are not just out to liberate ourselves. Otherwise we'd be in the country instead of living and working in the city."

The members of the temple are not a music group in the sense of most of the people who are written about in the *MM*. But, finally, I asked Gurudas about the mantras they use.

"All mantras have generic and specific elements. There is the Hare, which is the call to love and serve and revere, and the Krishna – which is God, the specific element.

"The mantras are old and we do not write new ones because there is no point; the old ones have been proven. We know they work."

RICHARD WILLIAMS

NME 06|03|71

THERE are two separate Paul McCartney actions going on in the High Court – one to appoint an Apple receiver, one to break up The Beatles – and the fact is that a lot more mud will plop and splatter onto the face of their fame before spring turns to summer and "My Sweet Lord", "Another Day" and "Power To The People" slide down from the charts.

With headlines like "Paul was a spoilt child, says Ringo", the fact is also that the chances of a reunion grows dimmer by the day. Face the music... the Apple Dream Is Over, and that last Beatles album really did end up as a cheapskate epitaph, a cardboard tombstone, a sad and tatty end to the group who had taken popular music and turned it on its head around the world.

GAB ARCHIVE/REDFERNS

The *Let It Be* sessions at Apple HQ, Savile Row, early 1969: (l–r) Ringo, Paul, George, Yoko and John

That individual members of the Beatles are now more prolific than before is some consolation – "Another Day" and "Power To The People" are the two latest Beatle releases – but I can hardly understand the joy of those who seem to feel that, because of this, the cause of music is better served than in the past.

We have had The Beatles as both a team and The Beatles as individual artists... friends, and friendly rivals. Now they have allowed their understandable frustrations to well up into a near-hatred. Paul knocks John. John sneers at Paul. John sneers at George's album. George knocks Paul.

I believe that on the charts now we see not a release of Beatle music out of coincidence, or for the sake of it, but a subtle yet open warfare between them, which may have more than a little to do with the current court case.

For me, one of the biggest ironies of the situation is that Lennon, prophet of peace, and Harrison, man of God, seem to have jumped into the fray with extraordinary relish. For one who has so ardently pleaded for world peace, in fact, Lennon has always seemed to me to have an incredible knack for insult... and I still wonder how he feels that world peace is possible whilst he can't work his way around a private war on his own doorstep.

One of my greatest failings is a tendency towards maudlin reminiscences of the pre-*NME* days I knew when a black-jacketed group called The Beatles played around Liverpool, uncaring and uncomplicated, but they became difficult to resist when I contrast them with today's middle-class McCartney and Lennon the professional revolutionary of almost any cause.

Strange how so many of those old cliches – like, for instance, "money doesn't make you happy" – turn out to be right after all. With The Beatles, there just turned out to be nothing to fight for any more, and at the moment they're following the classic pattern of turning in and upon themselves. Money can't buy me love, my friend.

"To get a peaceful life I had to let Paul have his own way"

GEORGE HARRISON

For some examples, listen to these quotes from some of the recent court hearings. George Harrison: "To get a peaceful life, I always had to let Paul have his own way – even when it meant that songs of mine weren't being recorded.

"At the same time, I was helping to record Paul's own songs, and into the bargain I was having to put up with him telling me how to play my own instrument.

"Matters came to a head in a dismal and cold studio at Twickenham, when we were filming *Let It Be*. In front of the cameras, Paul started getting at me about the way I was playing. I decided I'd had enough, and I told the others I was leaving the group. After a few days the others asked me to return and – since Paul agreed he wouldn't try to interfere or teach me how to play – I went back.

"Since the row, Paul has treated me more as a musical equal... and I think this whole episode shows how a disagreement can be worked out so we all benefit."

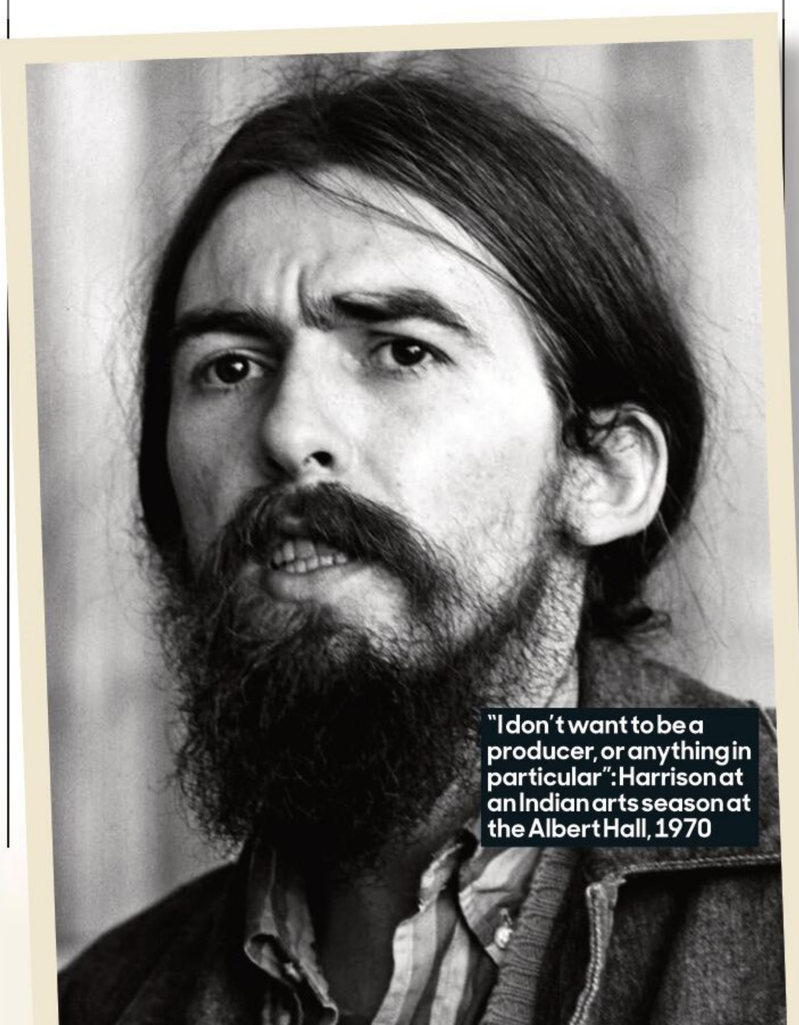
According to Ringo: "When I told Paul that the rest of us wanted to delay his solo album, he went completely out of control. He was shouting at me, prodding his fingers towards my face saying, 'I'll finish you now' and 'You'll pay'."

With soiled washing like this on view to the rest of us, it's difficult to see how McCartney and the others could ever work together again, unless some sad old reunion were to take place in 10 or 20 years. But I do notice faint signs of hope for conciliation beneath the legal wranglings.

Ringo, for instance, says he still feels it would be possible for The Beatles to resolve their differences. Harrison says his row with McCartney enabled them to have a fairer relationship after that. And in fairness to Lennon, at this particular court hearing he said he felt that the musical differences between McCartney and himself had helped, rather than hindered, the group.

But that was yesterday. And Yesterday, of course, all their troubles seemed so far away. ॐ

ALAN SMITH



"I don't want to be a producer, or anything in particular": Harrison at an Indian arts season at the Albert Hall, 1970

EVERETT COLLECTION INC / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; CUMMINGS ARCHIVES/REDFERNS

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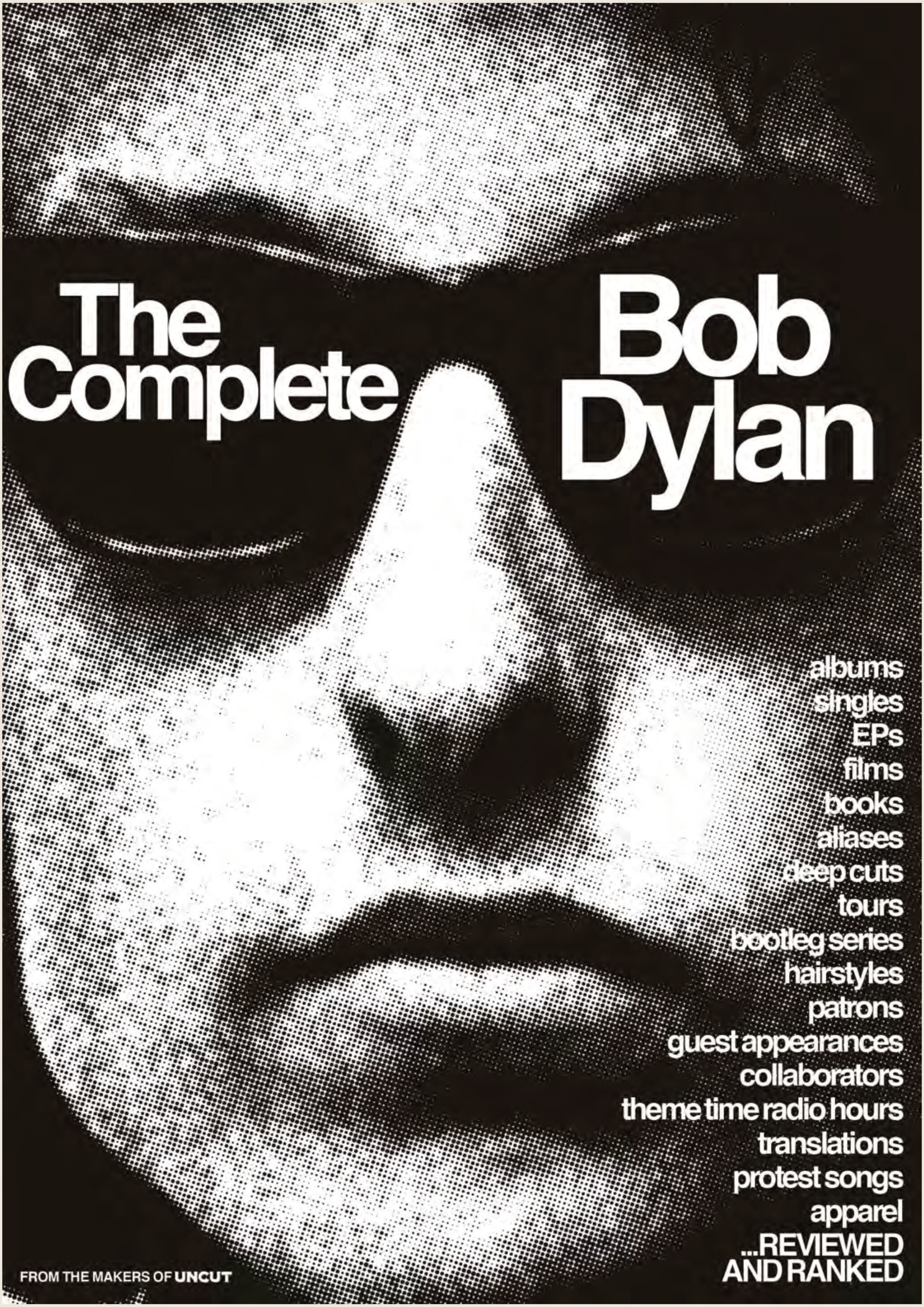

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GEORGE SOLO

CONCERT FOR BANGLADESH

RELEASED 10/01/72

To benefit refugees, Harrison, Clapton, Dylan and more line up for "the greatest rock'n'roll event ever".

BY NIGEL WILLIAMSON

"*My friend came to me with sadness in his eyes,*" George Harrison sang on his 1971 single "Bangla Desh". "*He told me that he wanted help before his country died...*" The "friend" was sitar maestro Ravi Shankar and his "country" was what was then known as East Pakistan and West Bengal, recently devastated by a cyclone that had killed upwards of half a million people and ravaged by a liberation war that had turned several millions more into refugees and would soon lead to the creation of the independent state of Bangladesh.

"I felt I had to do something," recalled Shankar. "I was in this terrible state of mind. I said, 'George, this is the situation.' While I talked he was very deeply moved, so I asked if he could help. Immediately he called his friends."

The friends Harrison called included Bob Dylan, Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton, Leon Russell, Billy Preston, Jesse Ed Davis, Jim Keltner, Badfinger and producer Phil Spector.

Augmented by a six-strong horn section led by saxophonist Jim Horn and a "soul choir" of backing singers under the direction of Don Nix, the result was *The Concert For Bangla Desh*, staged across two performances on the afternoon and evening of August 1, 1971 at New York's Madison Square Garden.

Long before Bob Geldof and Live Aid, it was the world's first all-star charity rock concert and was instantly hailed by *NME* as "the greatest indoor rock'n'roll event ever held". You could see why, for a summit meeting involving the dual lightning rods of 1960s popular culture – Dylan and The Beatles – was unprecedented.

Dylan had abandoned touring five years earlier and the same period of time had elapsed since Harrison and Starr had played their final concert with The Beatles. To add to the rarity of the event, Clapton, another 1960s icon, had retreated into heroin addiction and become a recluse. Years later he admitted that he had told Harrison he would only fly to New York "if he could guarantee to keep me supplied".

The drugs were apparently duly arranged and waiting in Clapton's hotel room on arrival. Unfortunately, the heroin was street-cut and its lack of potency sent him into cold turkey, which meant he missed the rehearsals and only made a shaky appearance at the concert at last minute, when – it's alleged – Allen Klein came up with medicinal-quality junk.

At a press conference Harrison spoke of hoping to have the live album of the shows in the shops within 10 days. Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young had recently moved with similar alacrity with their single "Ohio", but a triple album provided greater logistical challenges, and so it was four months before Apple was able to release the package – a delay that was in part down to some typically bullshit politics by the American record labels to whom the various artists were signed and who put the "protection" of their business interests above relieving a humanitarian crisis.

When the recordings eventually appeared, it became evident that Harrison – with only limited production assistance from Spector – had succeeded spectacularly in capturing the spirit of

CRITICS' VERDICT

"Between them, Harrison and Phil Spector have managed to transfer all the astonishing emotion of the event onto vinyl. The sound is crystal-clear throughout, and they've left just the right amount of applause in so that the listener is dragged right into the event. It's hard, in places, to keep a dry eye."
Richard Williams, MM, January 1, 1972

"The performances are not all that the stars might have wished for, but most of them are out of practice when it comes to live shows."
Andy Gray, NME, January 8, 1972

the event in the grooves. He did so largely by keeping the imperfections and tampering as little as possible with the tapes.

George's introduction of Shankar at the start of the concerts set the tone, asking for respect as "Indian music is a little bit more serious than our music". In the event, the respect outstripped the understanding and wild applause greeted the tuning of his sitar. "If you appreciate the tuning so much, I hope you will enjoy the playing more," deadpanned Shankar.

Backed by sarod, tabla and tamboura, the 16-minute classical recital that follows is timeless and intricate, building to a thrilling rhythmic climax as Shankar plucks cascading waterfalls of notes from the strings of his sitar. More than 30 years later, he composed a similarly transcendent piece as the opener to Harrison's memorial concert at London's Royal Albert Hall.

Leading a live band for the first time, Harrison performed four songs from *All Things Must Pass*, including a stripped-down "My Sweet Lord" and a lovely "Beware Of Darkness" on which he shared the vocals with the Southern drawl of Leon Russell, who also contributes a stonking, over-sexed "Jumpin' Jack Flash"/"Youngbood" medley that's about as far from Shankar's spiritual calm as it's possible to get. Billy Preston's gospel shouter "That's The Way God Planned It" is more devotionally sympatico and Ringo – sounding cheerily out of key on an exuberant "It Don't Come Easy" – is a delight.

Of the three Beatles songs included in the programme, the weakest is "While My Guitar Gently Weeps", which falls flat thanks to Clapton's unfocused and underwhelming solo. "I wasn't really there," he later admitted. "I felt ashamed. I let a lot of people down that night, most of all myself."

Much better are a magical "Here Comes The Sun" backed by the massed acoustic guitars and harmonies of Badfinger and a movingly soulful "Something".

The two *Abbey Road* songs enclose a spellbinding 20-minute, five-song set by "a friend of us all, Mr Bob Dylan".

Dylan's appearance was apparently in the balance until the last minute and after such outliers at *Nashville Skyline* and *Self Portrait* nobody knew what to expect. In the event, backed by Harrison on guitar, Russell on bass and Ringo on tambourine, he magically resurrected the guitar strumming, harmonica-blowing poet laureate of the 1960s.

Filling Side Five of the vinyl release, it was as if – out of respect for his benign host – Dylan had agreed to resurrect for one last time the mythic voice-of-a-generation image that we thought had been buried forever. Sounding humble but confident, engaged and utterly non-cynical, he even sang "Blowin' In The Wind" for the first time in years.

Aptly, the album closes with a messily irresistible all-hands-on-deck big band version of "Bangla Desh", a studio recording of which had been released as a single in the week leading up to the concert.

It mattered not that Side Six rather ran out of steam, containing just two songs and lasting little more than eight minutes. Nobody felt short-changed, for seldom before or since has rock music sounded so honest, so caring – and so capable of making us smile and cry at the same time. ॐ

TRACKMARKS

1. Bangla Dhun ★★★★
2. Wah-Wah ★★★★
3. My Sweet Lord ★★★★
4. Awaiting On You All ★★★
5. That's The Way God Planned It ★★★★
6. It Don't Come Easy ★★★
7. Beware Of Darkness ★★★★★
8. While My Guitar Gently Weeps ★★★
9. Jumpin' Jack Flash/Youngblood ★★★★
10. Here Comes The Sun ★★★★★
11. A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall ★★★★
12. It Takes A Lot To Laugh, It Takes A Train To Cry ★★★★★
13. Blowin' In The Wind ★★★★
14. Mr Tambourine Man ★★★★
15. Just Like A Woman ★★★★★
16. Something ★★★★★
17. Bangla Desh ★★★

Label: Apple
Producer: George Harrison, Phil Spector
Recorded: Madison Square Garden, New York, August 1, 1971
Personnel includes: George Harrison (vocals, guitars), Ravi Shankar (sitar), Bob Dylan (vocals, acoustic guitar, harmonica), Leon Russell (piano, vocals, bass), Ringo Starr (drums, vocals, tambourine), Billy Preston (Hammond organ, vocals), Eric Clapton (guitar), Jesse Ed Davis (guitar), Klaus Voormann (bass), Jim Keltner (drums), Badfinger (acoustic guitars)
Highest chart position: UK 1; US 2

"I don't want to make money myself"

Still wrangling with the taxman – and The Chiffons' songwriter – George masterminds the star-studded Concert For Bangladesh while also overseeing the construction of a new studio at Apple, originally intended for The Beatles. "It is a bit sad we're not together to use it..."

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Two shows, 40,000 attendees, $250,000 box office takings: The Concert For Bangladesh, Madison Square Garden, NYC, August 1, 1971

NME 07|08|71

BOB DYLAN, scrubby beard, garbed in denim jacket, green T-shirt and fawn trousers, stood up front of the 70ft stage at Madison Square Garden. A quiet, intensely interested member of the 20,000 audience.

I stood beside him. None of the 20,000 knew me – apparently he was equally anonymous, until he went on stage.

We were watching the George Harrison big band. An aggregation which no promoter could afford to book.

There was the wonderful, wonderful piano playing of Leon Russell complemented by the vibrant, full-blooded organ playing and singing of Billy Preston – who even did a 'Mick Jagger' *pas de deux* across the stage.

George Harrison at Madison Square Garden on Sunday had put the seal on that which Muhammad Ali could not prove – that a hero of the '60s can reappear and conquer. George was a knock-out! As Alfred G Aronowitz said in the *New York Post*, it was "an over-whelming spectacle... as much an event in history of our times as anything that music has to offer." It was almost the understatement of the year.

20,000 people, twice over, stood and cheered the greatest pop concert in two decades. Great, if one takes the meaning to be fine music. It was all happening for this 20,000 per concert as they stood on their peds and yelled their lungs out.

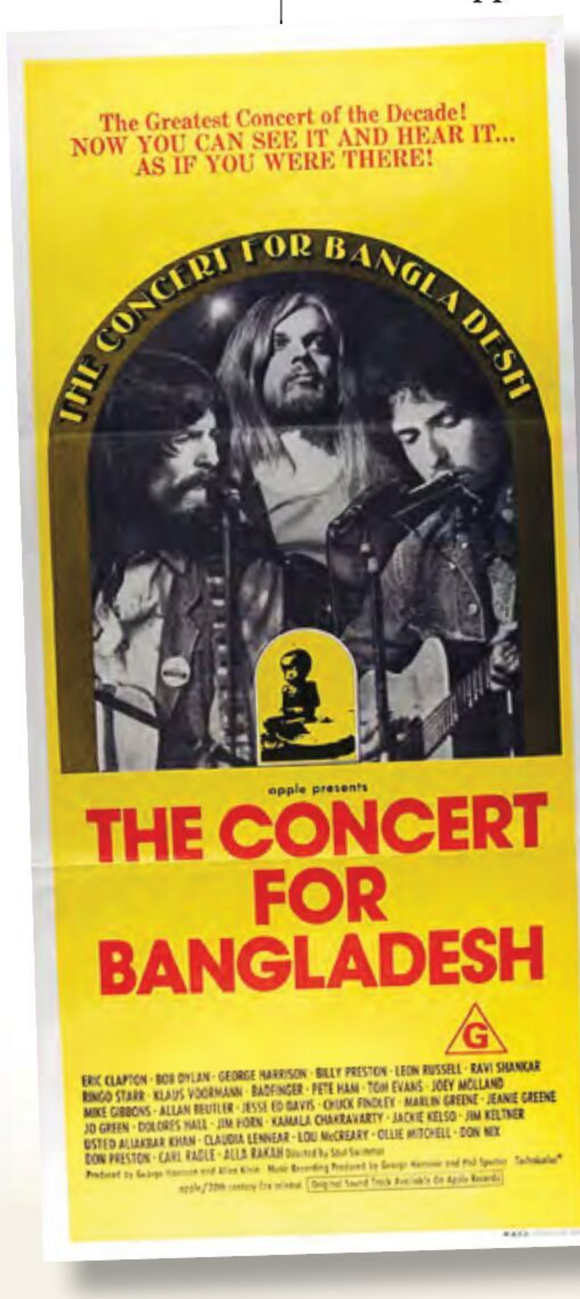
It was George's day. He had arranged it, he had worried about it. He cared about the purpose tremendously – that all the money went to the aid of the children who were victims of the Bangladesh tragedy.

There was 250,000 dollars in the box office – and nobody touched a penny. Every red cent was on a cheque from the Madison Square Garden management direct to Unicef to use for the kids of Bangladesh.

The overheads? It cost over $100,000 to put on the show in expenses. And Allen Klein, president of ABKCO Industries Inc and the business manager of Apple, picked up the tab personally on the hall.

Ravi Shankar, who had originally interested George in the venture, proved why he is India's greatest classical sitar player. A Bengali himself, he had persuaded George to ask friends to play the concerts as a benefit for his homeland.

It was George who got in touch with Dylan – it was George who invited the fabulous lineup to appear. And one has Ringo's authority for saying so because they were in constant touch by telephone arranging this while George was in LA and Ringo was filming in Spain. Dylan's contribution was tremendous – the audience stood and applauded for a full three minutes without sitting down.



And the big band played on. On and on, and the audience stood as George contributed "Something", "My Sweet Lord", "Hear Me Lord" and concluded with "Bangladesh".

It's a lovely number – and New York on Sunday at Madison Square Garden was a lovely peaceful place in spite of 2,000 people outside who tried to break down police barriers to get in – and failed. For them, those inside must be sorry.

Although there were 150 police (25 of which were in plain clothes) the Madison Square Garden authorities inside said it was the best organised concert they had had. ***LES PERRIN***

NME 16|10|71

UP to the latter quarter of 1970, George Harrison was the mystery man of The Beatles. The lead guitarist who didn't write... except for the occasional album track. The Beatle who'd probed more deeply into Indian mysticism and culture than the other three, the one who introduced the others to the teachings of the Maharishi and the man who popularised the sitar as a rock instrument when his beautiful "Within You, Without You" appeared on the enigmatic *Sgt Pepper*.

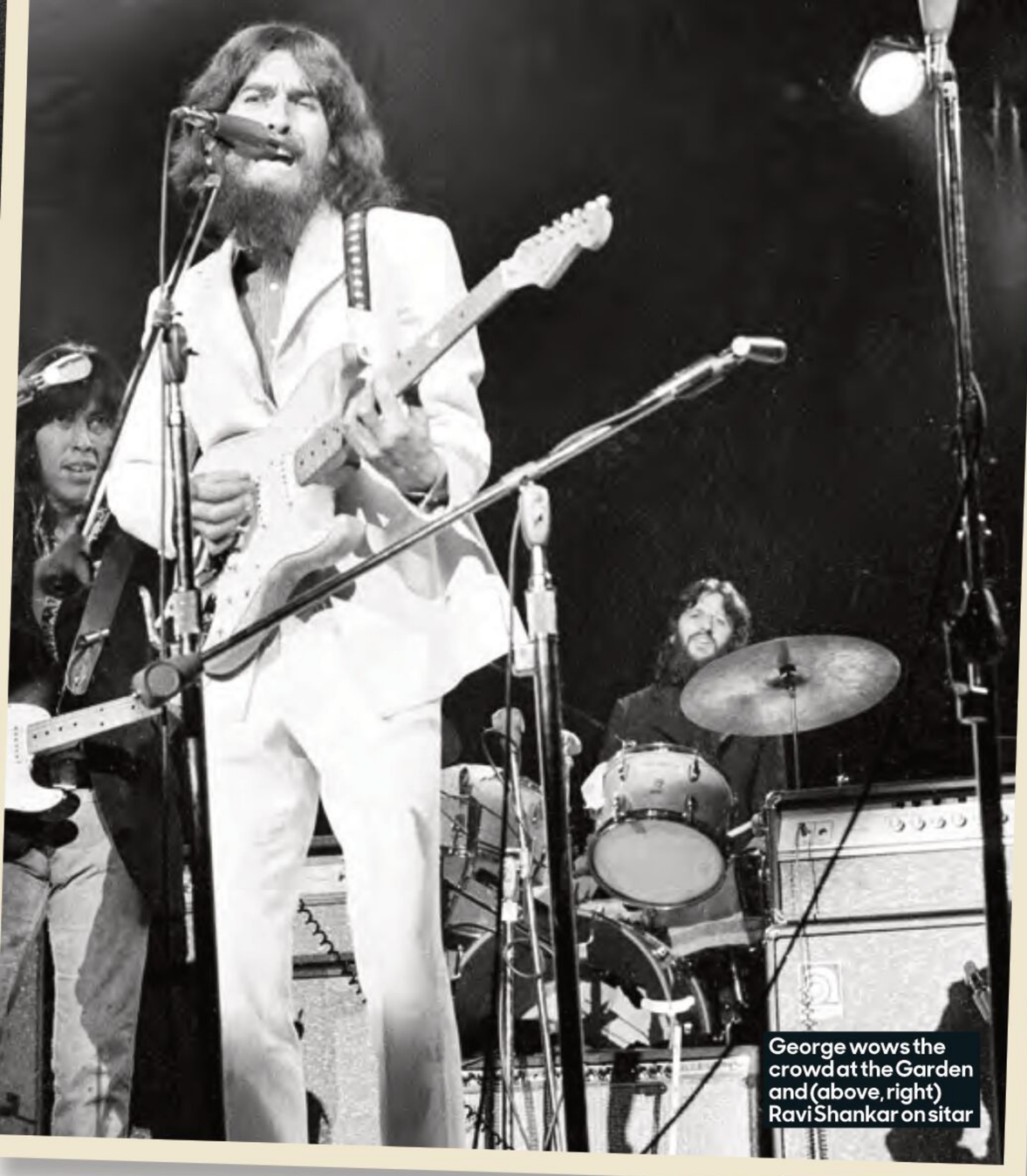
During the slow, almost agonising period of accusation and denial which heralded the parting of The Beatles, George produced two solo albums, *Electronic Music* and *Wonderwall...*, both of which passed off without too much notice being taken of them by a press that was far too concerned with the daily "happenings" of John, Yoko, McCartney and Klein.

Beatles song publisher Dick James didn't even bother to sign George up to a songwriting contract when he sealed the fate of the prolific Lennon/McCartney duo.

But the strong influences that had been brought to bear on George during his quiet "background" period with the other three had started to gel into what was to prove to be a phenomenal songwriting talent and, during the latter half of 1970 he was found to be steadily working away on his first real solo album.

When this was eventually released, George Harrison finally received the acclaim from the media that he'd deserved for so long. He also received his fair share of trouble... first from the composers of the Eurovision song contest winner "Congratulations", who claimed against a spoof version of the song that appears on "All Things Must Pass", and then, more seriously, a court action was started by the composers of the old Chiffons hit "He's So Fine", who claimed that George's worldwide hit from the album, "My Sweet Lord", bore more than just a slight resemblance to their song. That court action is still pending.

THOMAS MONASTER/NY DAILY NEWS ARCHIVE VIA GETTY IMAGES, GAB ARCHIVE/REDFERNS



George wows the crowd at the Garden and (above, right) Ravi Shankar on sitar

George's follow-up to "My Sweet Lord" was "Bangladesh" and it was principally about this subject that we talked when we met at the party held in London's Savile Row to celebrate the opening of Apple's plush new basement studios.

George was the only ex-Beatle present and, as such, was quickly surrounded by a crowd of journalists, all forgetting, temporarily, the purpose of the visit.

George is dressed casually, his beard hanging in straggly streaks across his shirt and his amazingly penetrating eyes taking in everything that surrounds him.

The *Bangladesh* album tape is playing very loudly over the studio speakers and George is explaining his current campaign to try and get the forthcoming three-album set released at the minimum price possible:

"I'm trying to get as much as possible out of it. There was a little trouble with Bob's (Dylan) contribution because, at first, it looked as if his record company wouldn't allow us (Apple) to release his part on the record but that, along with all the other artists' contributions, has been resolved now, everybody's given up their royalties and I've even persuaded EMI to manufacture the album for cost.

"It'll be a three-album set edited from the best parts of the concert and, if everybody contributes what they've said they would, it means that we can sell the LP for a lot less than we normally would and, hopefully, sell a lot more albums.

"I don't want to ask people to pay over £6 for the set and I don't want to make any money for myself out of it. At that price we'd probably sell 100,000 albums, but if the price were reduced considerably we'd probably sell more like half a million and, as the profit remains constant, that's a lot more money for the relief of refugees.

"It's with this in mind that I went to see Patrick Jenkin. He's the chief financial under-secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and I asked if it would be possible to reduce, or even scrub completely, the purchase tax on the record.

"Unfortunately he seemed to think that it was more important for this country to get the tax than for extra money to go to the starving kids in Bangla-Desh and, I'm afraid, he refused. I even threatened to leave the country and go and live abroad... You know, The Beatles used to earn a lot of revenue for the government but now, recording as individuals, the amount that we get them in taxes and foreign earnings must be considerably more."

George also said that he's agreed not to make public the facts of that meeting but that he'd decided to tell everybody because he was disappointed in their attitude.

"They seemed to think I was asking too much, but I don't think that anything is too much when you're trying to help millions of starving people."

A large sum of money was raised at the concert and a good deal more will be raised in record royalties (an estimated $18,000,000 if the album sells a million throughout the world), and George has other fingers in the pie to raise yet more money. "I'm asking EMI to reduce the price of the album even more and, at the moment, I'm editing the film of the concert with Bob and that will be sold to television companies throughout the world. Whichever one in any particular country that makes the highest bid.

"We've already sold it in the States and it will go out at peak viewing time, the first Saturday in December."

With $250,000 from the Madison Square Garden concert and a potential of $18,000,000 from the record sales and more from the film, the Bangladesh fund is swelling to enormous proportions. How did George think the money would be used?

"The term Bangla-desh has been bandied about just a little too much"

GEORGE HARRISON

"It's costing a phenomenal amount of money just to keep the millions of refugees fed every single day. If we gave them the money just for this purpose I doubt whether it would last for very long. What we'll probably do is set up a trust fund which will then distribute money for the best purposes.

"In other words, instead of just buying food and distributing it, some more long-term policy where the money can be used to promote agriculture and the provision of shelter for the people.

"When Ravi first suggested that I should help his idea was to put on the show here, but I explained that we'd probably get a far larger crowd in America. But we'll definitely be doing a show here. In fact, we'll probably be doing about six shows in various places and I'll try and persuade other big name stars to appear and contribute their fees.

"If I try and do a show for myself for a lot of money I'm lucky if I eventually finish up with a quarter of it. When I do something for charity at least I know that we get the full amount taken."

With his Bangladesh work involving him so heavily at the moment I wondered whether George was conscious of the need to make money for himself: "I certainly need to," was the reply, "everybody has to work for a living.

"There's a possibility that I'll do other concerts as well as the Bangladesh ones and I'll continue to record, but at the moment I'm fully occupied with working out the details of the Bangladesh thing which are all in my head at the moment.

"The word, or term Bangla-Desh, incidentally, has been bandied about just a little too much. People have used it to their own advantage and also intimated that I'm involved with whatever they're doing."

We returned to the subject for which we'd all gathered, the half-million-pound studio that Apple have been building for two years. As I walked in, an Apple executive whom I happen to know remarked, with a note of sadness in his voice, that the studio was constructed because "The Beatles said we want the finest studio in the world for us to record in. It's only a shame that they're not together now to use it."

I asked George if he'd still be using it. "It is a bit sad that we're not together to use it but I'll still be using it and, don't forget, the Apple label still has other artists who'll definitely use it and it'll be available for outside people to use like the Stones, who've always done a certain amount of recording and rehearsing at Apple."

The Beatles may not be around any more but the "Apple Scruffs" whom George immortalised in a track on *All Things Must Pass* are still around in force.

I had to push my way through a crowd of them patiently waiting to glimpse their heroes as I left the studio and, as I wandered down a relatively quiet Savile Row, I wondered whether the starving refugees of Bangladesh would ever realise the new future that they're facing now is a direct result of what was happening in an obscure Liverpool cellar almost nine years ago.

JOHN HALSALL

THOMAS MONASTER/NY DAILY NEWS ARCHIVE VIA GETTY IMAGES

GEORGE SOLO

LIVING IN THE MATERIAL WORLD

RELEASED 30|05|73

The Quiet One retreats further. Estranged amongst the greenery of Friar Park, he crafts an intimate classic of self-admonishment.

BY GRAEME THOMSON

HOW did it feel to be George Harrison in 1973? The inside sleeve photo for his second post-Beatles solo album offers certain clues. It presents a gaudy Last Supper held at a mock-Tudor Californian mansion. A palatial repast is laid before Harrison, depicted as a Dadaist emperor-priest, as the alluring limb of a young lady dangles from an upper window behind him. It's an all-you-can-eat buffet served to a man striving to starve himself of life's more basic temptations, juxtaposed with a vivid painting of Krishna from the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The visuals tell part of the story, but those seeking a full reading needed the music. *Living In The Material World* was conceived in the slipstream of the phenomenal success of *All Things Must Pass*; the heady highs of the Concert For Bangladesh and its tangled aftermath; the continuing litigious soap opera surrounding The Beatles; marital strife, spiritual thirst and earthly temptation. Little wonder it arrived as a quiet storm exposing multiple stress fractures. By 1973, Harrison had become, according to his friend Klaus Voormann, a "very extreme character". He would retreat into his own world, rising with the sun and meditating all day in solitude at Friar Park, or chanting for days on end. When he emerged from these intense periods of spiritual contemplation he was primed for more traditional forms of release: cocaine and women figured high on his list of diversions. His wife, Pattie Boyd, was increasingly frozen out of his interests, whether they were restoring the estate's vast gardens, seeking God, or making music.

CRITICS' VERDICT

"It's an improvement on *All Things Must Pass* – pleasant, competent, vaguely dull and inoffensive. It's also breathtakingly unoriginal and – lyrically at least – turgid, repetitive and so damn HOLY I could scream."
Tony Tyler, NME, June 9, 1973

"The effect of reading the lyric sheet is rather like finding yourself at the feet of some Tibetan lama. The tone is didactic; occasionally he even comes out with Confucius-like 'truth'."
Michael Watts, MM, June 9, 1973

Some of *Living In The Material World* was recorded at the Apple Studios in Savile Row, but most of the sessions took place at Friar Park, where Harrison had installed Altec speakers and an old 16-track EMI console in the ballroom, christening his home studio FPSHOT (Friar Park Studios, Henley-On-Thames). He once again hired Phil Spector as co-producer, but the eccentric American was in terrible shape and often AWOL. He gets credit for only one song, the lilting "Try Some, Buy Some", and only then because the backing track was lifted from a Ronnie Spector session in 1971, and gilded with a new Harrison vocal.

Otherwise, Harrison self-produced with an intimate touch. No longer hiding behind the Wall of Sound, swaddled in candlelight and incense at FPSHOT, he marshalled a band that included Nicky Hopkins and Gary Wright on piano and keyboard, Voormann on bass and Ringo Starr and Jim Keltner on drums. Augmented by Jim Horn's saxophone and flute, Zakir Hussein's tabla and John Barham's orchestrations, they created what is in some regards a more coherent work than *All Things Must Pass*, with softer textures and more thoughtful arrangements. Though only three songs feature electric guitar, Harrison produces some of the finest playing of his life, shining with versatility and warmth.

Although there are moments of humour and rock'n'roll raucousness, the sense of personal crisis seeps through the often austere music and recurring lyrical themes. Even in the album's most carefree songs, there are tears, burdens, frustrations, betrayals and unfulfilled needs, yet beyond what some listeners and many reviewers regarded as the dour dogma

of enlightenment lie some of Harrison's most overtly exposed writing. "The Light That Has Lighted The World" is lit up by Hopkins' piano and Harrison's slide solo, but the prettiness of the music and the perfect symmetry of its structure can't quite distract from a bitter, some might say hypocritical, attack on those who appear "*hateful*" of Harrison's changes and would sit in judgement upon him. The chugging "The Lord Loves The One (That Loves The Lord)" is welded to an equally uncompromising lyric, widely interpreted as the crowing of a privileged superstar who professes to have seen the emptiness of the rock "lifestyle" from his 120-room mansion while everyone else is stumbling blindly in the dark.

In fact, much of the moralising evident on *Living In The Material World* is at least partially aimed at the man in the mirror, and makes better reading as a stern note-to-self. "Who Can See It" is as naked an expression of hurt and need as anything Lennon wrote during this period. "*I only ask/ That what I feel/Should not be denied me now,*" might be the single most heart-breaking line Harrison ever penned, and he maximises the emotion with a wonderful vocal performance. The quivering "Be Here Now" is even more intimate. A reluctant superstar snared in the perceptions, illusions and presumptions of others, Harrison longs to live in the moment, informing both the world at large and those closest to him that "*it's not like it was before*".

There are sparkier moments of spiritual revelation. The light-footed "Don't Let Me Wait Too Long" offers yet another iteration of the basic message of "My Sweet Lord" – God, please reveal yourself – wrapped up in a perky tune. "Give Me Love (Give Me Peace On Earth)" is a gently rolling reflection on the need to "*touch and reach you*", and another showcase for Harrison's distinctive dual slide guitars.

On an album relying primarily on acoustic textures, the brassy title track is the album's big production number, with barrelling piano, full-blown sax and slide, and an amusingly cheesy "showbiz" finale. Hussein's tabla evokes The Beatles at their most Indo-centric, there's a light-hearted reference to "*John and Paul*", and Starr performs a heavily signalled drum roll at the sound of his own name. In contrast to Lennon's confrontational "How Do You Sleep?", Harrison's comment on The Beatles' post-1970 affairs, "Sue Me, Sue You Blues", favours dark humour over playground name-calling. Forcefully welding a raw bottleneck blues to the singsong rhythms of a square dance, it draws the conclusion that the only people getting rich are the lawyers.

Living In The Material World was a hugely successful record, but it was not universally embraced in the manner of its predecessor, and has endured mixed fortunes since. It was the hit that marked the beginning of the end of Harrison's reign as a populist solo artist. A deep retreat into the self, it was perceived widely at the time as a work of a detached millionaire mired in his own piety, favouring uncompromising dogma over a more universal understanding. It's a view that bears a certain amount of scrutiny, yet viewed from distance, removed from its immediate context, it's not the hectoring or hypocrisy that stands out, but the longing of a mortal man aching for the strength to be transformed. ॐ

TRACKMARKS

1. Give Me Love (Give Me Peace On Earth) ★★★★
2. Sue Me, Sue You Blues ★★★
3. The Light That Has Lighted The World ★★★★
4. Don't Let Me Wait Too Long ★★★
5. Who Can See It ★★★★
6. Living In The Material World ★★★
7. The Lord Loves The One (That Loves The Lord) ★★
8. Be Here Now ★★★★
9. Try Some, Buy Some ★★★
10. The Day The World Gets 'Round ★★
11. That Is All ★★★

Label: Apple
Produced by: George Harrison (with Phil Spector on "Try Some, Buy Some")
Recorded at: Apple Studios, London; FPSHOT, Oxfordshire; Abbey Road Studios, London
Personnel: George Harrison (vocals, guitars, dobro, sitar), Nicky Hopkins (piano, electric piano), Gary Wright (organ, harmonium, electric piano, harpsichord), Klaus Voormann (bass, stand-up bass, tenor saxophone), Jim Keltner (drums, percussion), Ringo Starr (drums, percussion), Jim Horn (saxophones, flute, horn arrangement), Zakir Hussain (tabla), John Barham (orchestral and choral arrangements), Leon Russell (piano on "Try Some, Buy Some"), Jim Gordon (drums, tambourine on "Try Some, Buy Some"), Pete Ham (acoustic guitar on "Try Some, Buy Some")
Highest chart position: UK 2; US 1

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

"George was so happy to play the guitar": Harrison in the studio in 1964 with a 12-string Rickenbacker

"He wasn't quiet at all"

In early 2021, Harrison's lifelong friend KLAUS VOORMANN shares with *Uncut* his memories of the George *he* knew. Klaus was there: from the legendarily spartan beginnings of greatness in Hamburg, to sharing fish fingers and cornflakes in London at the height of Beatlemania, through the "legal shit" of the break-up, and George's creative rebirth at Friar Park. "He liked having a bunch of people around," learns GRAEME THOMSON. "They really understood what he was doing."

Psyched: Klaus Voorman at home in south London, with his original artwork for *Revolver* and the Bee Gees' first LP, July 1967

UNCUT 7|2021

THE BEATLES ARRIVE IN HAMBURG ON AUGUST 17, 1960. AFTER SIX WEEKS AT THE INDRA CLUB, ON OCTOBER 4, 1960 THEY PLAY THEIR FIRST SHOW AT THE KAISERKELLER, WHERE THEY STRIKE UP A FRIENDSHIP WITH 22-YEAR-OLD GRAPHIC ARTIST KLAUS VOORMANN, ART STUDENT ASTRID KIRCHHERR AND JÜRGEN VOLLMER, A PHOTOGRAPHER AT THE INSTITUTE FOR FASHION

THE thing to remember about George Harrison is that he was a Gemini. The twin sign. Yin and yang. On *Revolver* you have "Love You To" and "Taxman". Two sides. He could be really living this spiritual life – into meditation and getting up at 5am to see the sun come up – and doing it very extensively. Then suddenly he would go crazy! He could swap from the one extreme to the other, and he could find ways to make himself believe that it was the good thing to do. He would talk himself into it. This is why he was always searching for something – because he knew himself well enough to know that he needed something to hold onto.

The first time I saw George he was only 17 years of age. He was very different to how he was later. He was a cocky little boy! This band he was with was completely unknown. It was the autumn of 1960. In this club in Hamburg, the Kaiserkeller, they played for people to dance. George was singing all those funny songs, which he did later on a little bit, when he sat around and played ukulele. He was into songs like "I'm Henry The Eighth, I Am", singing it all cockney. He would sing all those Eddie Cochran numbers too, like "Twenty Flight Rock".

It took some time to get to know them. We had gone to concerts and jazz clubs, but this scene was completely new to us. We went many times. They had started looking over to us – "There they are again, those Existentialists!" – and we were looking at the stage all the time, seeing all the details. "Look at George, he's got big ears, hasn't he! And he has funny teeth – he has those Dracula teeth!"

"We were looking at the stage... 'Look at George, he's got big ears, hasn't he!'"

KLAUS VOORMANN

They were talking on stage in English and our English was not so hot. Eventually [*Astrid and Jürgen*] said to me, "Klaus, you speak English. Why don't you make contact so we can meet them?" John was standing by the stage, and I went over and took the record cover I had designed with me, which was "Walk... Don't Run" – by The Typhoons, not The Ventures. I showed it to John and he said, "Go to Stuart, he's the artistic one." Because John was the rock'n'roller, he didn't want anything to do with art. So I went over to Stuart [*Sutcliffe*] and we got on like the world on fire. It was amazing, we talked about everything. It was only natural then that in the breaks between shows we went out with Stuart and the others came along, and we'd watch them eat their cornflakes.

We became friends. All of them were very much into music. Rock'n'roll was the most important thing. The list of songs they were able to play was the largest of all the bands in Hamburg. They were so busy and eager, listening to the records again and again until they got it down. At this stage, all you could see is that they played those songs really well. They were a great rock'n'roll band, with three great voices. I didn't know anything about them writing songs, that came much, much later.

George was so happy to play the guitar. He was very exuberant, a really great guy. He didn't show any signs of searching, that happened later. I don't think that was part of his life at that time. I didn't get any sense that the others patronised him. I think they were very equal to each other. Pete Best often didn't come along, he'd go off with some girl or something, but John, Paul and George really stuck together.

You couldn't go to a worse place than the one they were living in. The Reeperbahn was the sin mile of Germany, it was just terrifying. Where they were living was terrible. I would call it a broom cupboard. It had a bare light bulb hanging down from the ceiling. No wardrobe, they were living out of a suitcase. Sweaty walls. No window! Just a door. Those really simple beds used in the war. Really terrible. We knew they were taking pills. I did too! We all did. It was so they could stay up longer and still be happy when they had to play at three in the morning.

We gave them suggestions of what to do.

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO / TONY GALE

Hell for leather: The Beatles, with Pete Best on drums, make one of their first appearances at the Cavern Club in Liverpool, February 1961

I WANT TO TELL YOU...

VOORMANN DESIGNS THE CLASSIC COVER FOR *REVOLVER* AND REMAINS A CLOSE OBSERVER AS THE BAND QUIT TOURING AND BEGIN TO PULL APART. MEANWHILE, HARRISON STARTS EXPLORING MORE ESOTERIC PERSONAL INTERESTS

Sometimes we took trips to the Baltic Sea, or we went to the cinema or maybe even to an exhibition. They didn't have anybody in those Hamburg days. They were little boys away from home. What are they going to do? We just invited them along. They came to get something good to eat at Astrid's house. They all went in the bath tub and got washed, as they couldn't even clean themselves properly in the digs they were living in. You wonder today, 'How could the parents let those guys go out there?' But they handled it well, they learned a lot – in lots of respects! – and they certainly learned how to play rock and roll music.

Because George was 17, eventually the authorities said that he had to go back home [*Harrison was deported for being underage on November 21, 1960*]. It was terrible. Stuart and Astrid brought him to the train station in Hamburg. I did a little drawing of him leaving and I wrote next to it 'Packed like a mule'. He had a really nice amplifier he bought in Germany and his guitar. Astrid gave him a big bag of food for the journey. He had to go by train, then by ship, and train again – he was scared that he would fall asleep and someone would steal all his stuff. It wasn't easy for him, taking this journey all by himself at 17 years of age.

Later, Paul and Pete Best were deported. They were put in a cell in the Davidwache police station on the Reeperbahn and sent back. Of course, they all came back to Hamburg again and we kept in touch.

A couple of years later, in late 1963, I wanted to come to England. I talked to George on the phone, and he said, "Why don't you come and stay with us?" So I came and stayed at 57 Green Street in Mayfair. When I arrived, Bill Corbett, the chauffeur, said, "The boys want you to come down to the studio." Bill drove me down and there were kids in front of the gates. I thought, 'Oh God, they're so famous now, what am I going to do?' I didn't know how they would react.

I just walked into the studio and immediately George ran towards me and embraced me. The nice thing was, they were so excited about this success. It was lovely to be a part of that.

All four of them had lived in the Green Street apartment, then John went to Emperor's Gate with Cynthia, and Paul went to stay with Jane Asher. So it was only George and Ringo left when I moved in. They had nothing there! The apartment was barely furnished. It was very cold – a cold atmosphere. Bill bought two chandeliers to put in there, so at least it looked a little more decorated. Again, like in Hamburg, they didn't have anybody there. No aunt, no mother, no friend. Just Brian Epstein. For food, all they could do was either fish fingers or cornflakes – and a cup of tea. That was it.

They were filming *A Hard Day's Night* during this time. They had to get up early, that was the main problem! They didn't spend much time there, but they had a tape recorder and a record player and great records. I played my classical guitar and they complimented me.

I had a great time in that apartment. I could go downstairs and do whatever I wanted, but when the boys went down there was screaming all night. It must have been terrible for the other people who lived in that street. It was an awful noise. Wherever they went, the fans always found out where they were. They had to drive fast!

While I was there, it was George's 21st birthday, and the heap [*of mail*] was as tall as I am. The fans had sent him cards and keys made out of marzipan and cake. He took the letters and read quite a lot of them. He was always nice to the fans, he knew them by name. He would say, "Ah, how's your mother doing...?"

I VISITED George and Pattie in their house in Esher. They started to realise that they were rich and had money – so why live in an apartment in London? I remember one time, The Fool were there, painting his fireplace, and George was painting the house and smoking lots of joints. George never got really into the heavy drugs. LSD was heavy enough. He actually realised pretty soon that this was all silly and he didn't continue doing it. He went to Haight-Ashbury and it was terrible. He realised what bullshit it all was.

In 1966, John called me and said, "Do you have an idea for the cover?" I was invited to come to the studio and listen to the tracks on *Revolver* – they played me whatever they had done up to that point.

For the cover, the spread of fans they had was the most important thing. There might be an older mother in the venue, then some young kid. There were the ones who loved "She Loves You" and the ones who'd get on with "Tomorrow Never Knows" and all those turned-around tapes, with the crazy sounds and bird noises. You had to combine all those people onto one image. I knew the fans definitely wanted to see lots of pictures, so that was the main thing, seeing the boys in the band. In those days, it was sensational if people had long hair; it was a political statement. So the hair was an important part. I tried to combine all those things into one image.

On the cover, George is staring right at us. I had set up the faces the way I wanted them, and I had a hard time to get the likeness of George. He was a beautiful boy, but very, very difficult to draw. It's interesting, isn't it? I never knew why. He had beauty and charisma, everything you want to see in a person, but it was difficult to get it right. The look of the eyes was important to me. I tried several times and eventually I just took this newspaper and cut out the eyes and the mouth and stuck it on there. I thought, 'That looks good', so I kept it like that.

People would say he was The Quiet One, which was so silly. He ➤

I want to tell you: Voormann at the Grammy Museum, LA, to give an interview to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his award-winning *Revolver* artwork, March 7, 2017

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES, REBECCA SAPP/WIREIMAGE FOR THE RECORDING ACADEMY

wasn't quiet at all, he could be very direct. He could be very biting, very sarcastic. He could really tell people off, too, if he wanted. Lots of things could wind him up. If someone in the garden planted the tree in the wrong place, he could be very hard. Or if someone came up with a $100 bill and said, "Sign it for me", he'd say, "Piss off, you arsehole!" He didn't like the media and doing interviews, that's why they called him the quiet one. When he started having something to say, it was about religion.

I watched George's development. I wouldn't ask him directly, but I thought, 'Interesting, interesting!' At the start he wasn't so much into the meditation, at first it was just the music. Later, it was more apparent. He'd get together with Indian people and I knew he was close to Ravi Shankar. When I was living in Raynes Park, near Wimbledon, George came to visit. He played on my harmonium and wrote "Within You Without You" there in my apartment. I recorded it on my tape recorder and he took the tape home with him so he had the song down.

Already with The Beatles it had started to go in different directions. It wasn't the same as when they were living in Green Street. It was a band then and they were doing things together. Now, everyone was doing their own thing. They didn't play live, they didn't go on tour, so they just met in the recording studio as The Beatles. The connection of the band went downhill.

ESTATE OF KEITH MORRIS/REDFERNS

ALL THINGS MUST PASS

VOORMANN HAS A RINGSIDE SEAT DURING THE END OF THE BEATLES AND THE BLOSSOMING OF THEIR SOLO CAREERS. LIVING AT FRIAR PARK, HE WORKS ON HARRISON'S 1970 OPUS AND CEMENTS A FRIENDSHIP THAT WILL CONTINUE UNTIL HARRISON'S DEATH IN 2001

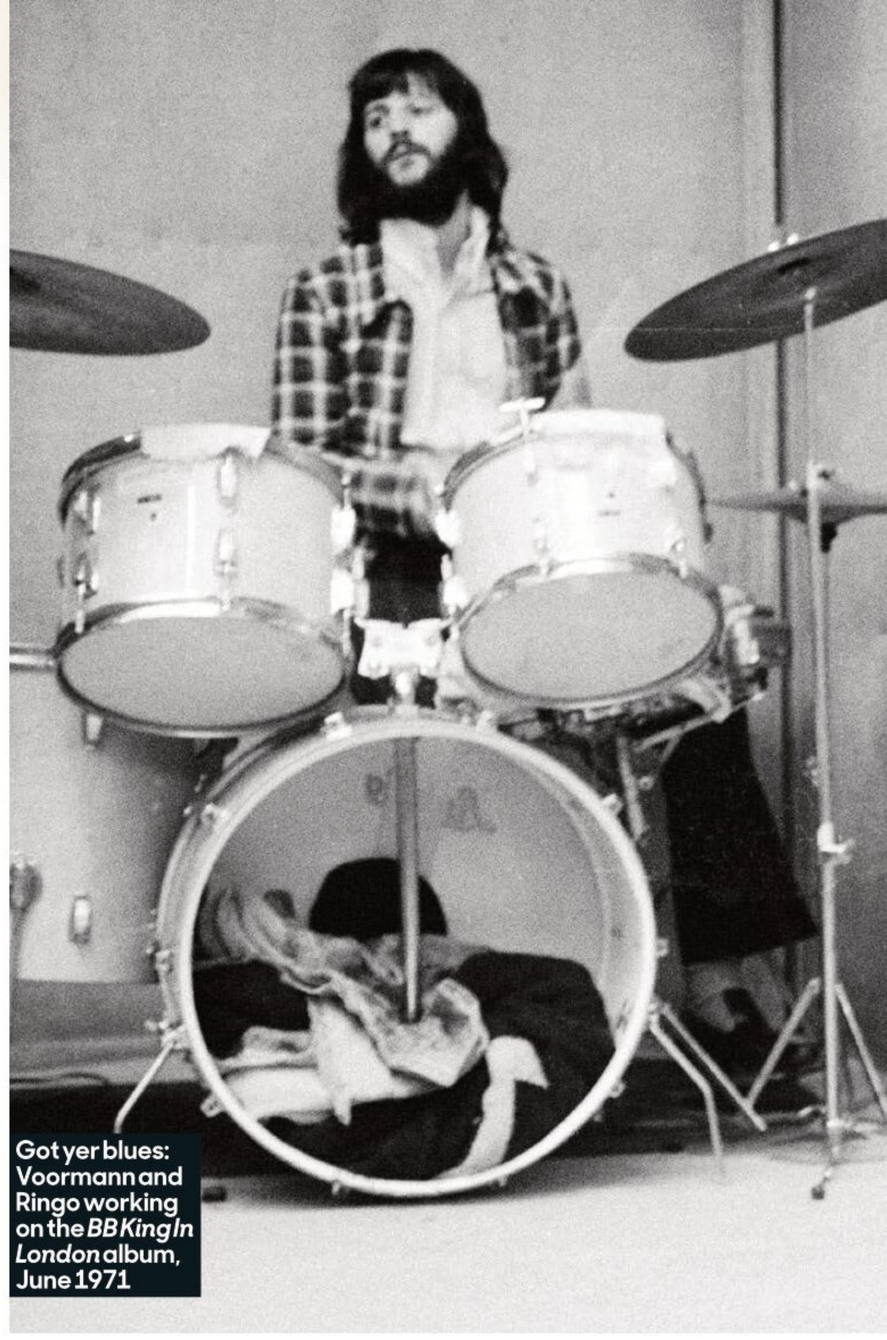
I WAS in the Manfred Mann band. We disbanded at almost exactly the same time as The Beatles disbanded. So I started playing for John and Ringo and George. Between those three there was no problem. There were a lot of times when George might say, "Paul is really pissing me off!" It was really heavy, what was going on. It felt like someone knifing someone else in the back, they really had hard feelings towards one another – some very dirty washing being done. It was legal shit that had to be taken care of, nothing to do with the actual personalities. They were four people who had gone separate ways, they didn't like the same things. There wasn't the same unity as there was before, but they were still really professional about working.

When George started *All Things Must Pass* he didn't have Friar Park, he was still living in Esher. Then he showed us pictures of this crazy house he wanted to buy, and he was very excited. I was there pretty much from the start – when water was still leaking in! I helped design his house, made sketches and plans for him. George was excited. He had something to play with, with the big gardens with the caves under the grounds.

I lived for a long time at Friar Park, from 1970 to 1972. First I lived in a room in the big house, then I had a little cottage that George let me have rent free. We had a ball, it was beautiful. We went around the gardens and played guitar and wrote songs. We would sit at the piano and play together, I'd play the left hand and he would play finger style on the right. I spent most days with him, even at breakfast and dinner. Pattie was still around and Kumar, this great Indian guy, was cooking beautiful food.

George was very excited at the period. He had all those great songs in his drawer and he never got to record them for The Beatles. And they kept coming! I would see him writing in the garden with a guitar when the sun was shining, or in the studio, or at the breakfast table.

He was liberated. I guess they all were. I had recorded with John and I love that record [*John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*], I love its directness and freshness. Those impulsive songs came out of a very direct feeling, writing the song and going direct to the studio, sitting there crying,



Got yer blues: Voormann and Ringo working on the *BB King In London* album, June 1971

"He wants to help..."

A KLAUS-EYE VIEW OF THE CONCERT FOR BANGLADESH

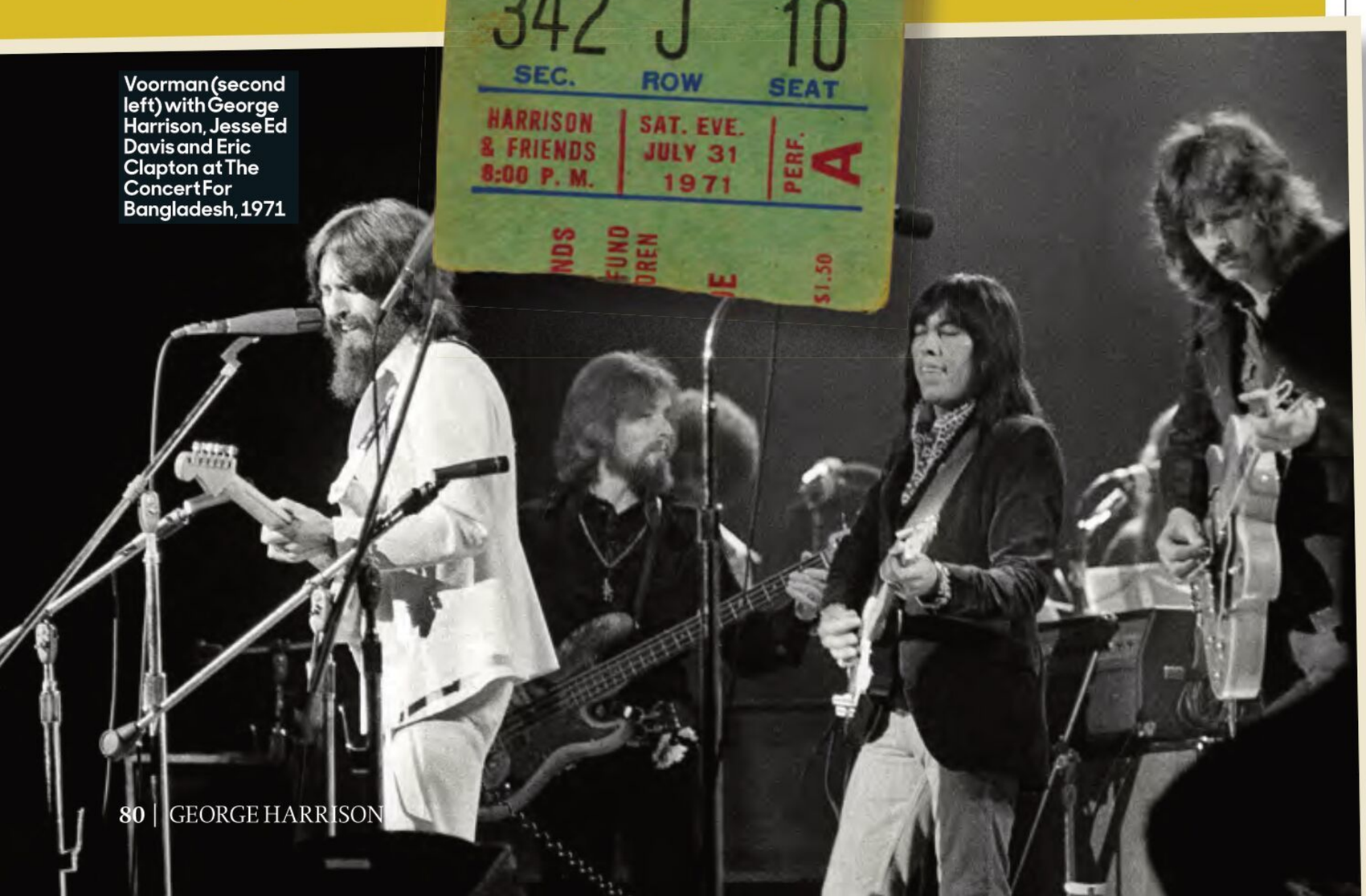
AUGUST 1 marked the 50th anniversary of The Concert For Bangladesh. Voormann helped Harrison set up the concert, and played bass in the house band. "I witnessed Ravi Shankar telling George about this problem in Bangladesh," he recalls. "Ravi said he was going to do a concert and George said, 'Well, I'll help you!'

"He went to LA to get musicians together, and I followed him and we stayed together. Everyone was so happy. I did an illustration of the rehearsals with Billy Preston, Ringo, George and myself and the brass section. It's very nice. Olivia saw it and said, 'Oh, I'd like to have it!' It was really a ball.

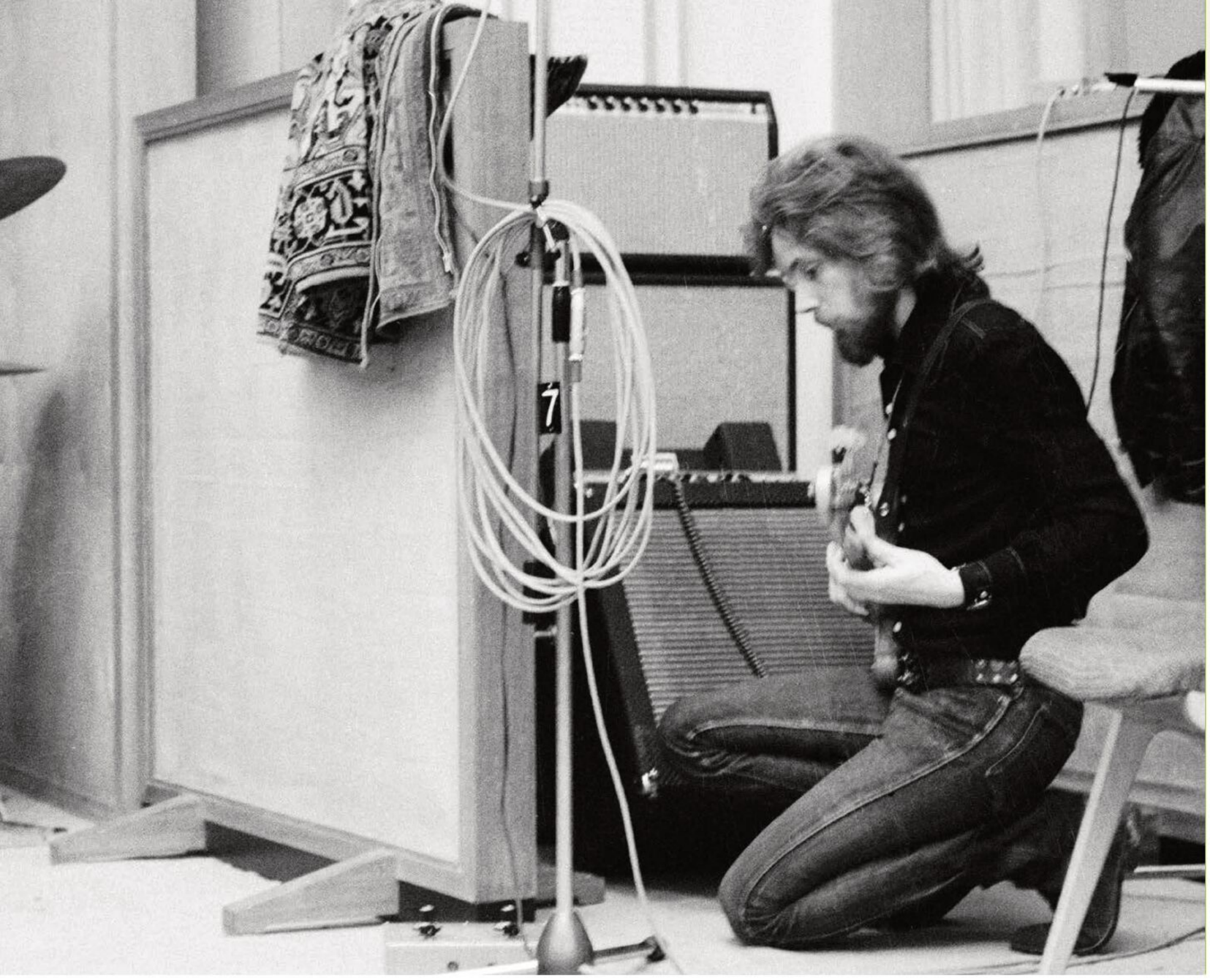
We all had so much fun. Nobody got paid, nobody had a record out that they wanted to promote, they just wanted to help.

"With Dylan, it was difficult for George. He was really good friends with Bob, but he knew he was a little strange and he knew he was scared to be up there again. Even after the rehearsals, George didn't know if he was going to do it or not – thankfully he turned up and he was terrific (below). George was great. He had never done this before. Someone who wasn't a frontman and didn't want to be one, he takes this burden on his shoulders and does it because he wants to help a friend. He did a fantastic job."

JIM WELLS/AP/SHUTTERSTOCK



Voorman (second left) with George Harrison, Jesse Ed Davis and Eric Clapton at The Concert For Bangladesh, 1971



laughing and hugging with Yoko. It's a fantastic piece of work. Just to play with John and Ringo as a trio was amazing.

Then George came along and he suddenly had this peaceful atmosphere. There was lots of time. John was very much involved with himself. George was completely different. He was really into having this bunch of people around him who he liked. They were friends who could play really well and who understood what he was doing. He took lots of care in showing his songs to us, we all made our suggestions and pulled the whole thing together. We never had any music sheets, we only had the lyrics and then he played the song – but bit by bit we worked ourselves into those songs.

We all felt good, and we all were very eager to do the best for George's songs. He asked if I knew any keyboard players and I suggested Gary Wright. Gary was very much into meditation, so those two got on really well. Carl Radle was a great bass player, Jim Gordon a great drummer, and at the time a really sweet, nice person. It was so fantastic to be in the studio with George and all these nice people. Ringo was there sometimes. Eric [*Clapton*] came in. I was so happy to be part of it.

I met Phil Spector several times, and there wasn't one moment where he had a gun, or he was being bad to anybody. He was always pleasant, very delicate. He made good suggestions; he was a great producer who got fantastic sounds. There was no sign of him being a person who could go crazy. Of course he was drunk sometimes, but that's about all. He was very funny. He got on well with George – and John. He was so nice to Yoko. I never saw him pissed off.

I was very involved with George during that time. He always brought me little presents. At Christmas I got a little Champ amplifier. The next year he gave me a Precision Fretless bass. From India he brought me a rug with lots of animals on it, which I have my feet on right now. He was such a great friend, but there was the phase where he went the other way.

I remember I was in New York and George asked me to come down – he was cutting the film for the Bangladesh concert. I came to the building and Dylan was sitting there, George was sitting there and the editor, and we sat around talking a little. Later on, the engineer told me that George had said, "Oh, Klaus is going to come down, hide the cocaine!" That was him having a bad conscience, because he knew I was so happy when he was in a good state of mind. I heard that and felt terrible. Because I'm not his father! I'm just his friend and he is hiding stuff.

All in all, however, it was a really good friendship. All the time until he died, George always contacted me, wrote a letter or called me. When he phoned he talked in pretend German and [*called himself*] Herr Schnitzel, pretending to be some German guy. Once he got really worried. There was a train accident in Germany, in Eschede [*in June 1998*], lots of people were killed. He left a message saying, "Please call me back, please call me back." I wasn't there, I was away. He left five or six messages on my answerphone. He was really worried. That was his nature. Jim Keltner says that as soon as George came near Los Angeles he would say, "Hey, I'm here, when can I see you?" It was the same with me. Whenever he was close, in Switzerland or Austria, anywhere in the vicinity, he'd call and we'd go shopping together.

It was really nice. My contact with George never ended, he was always a friend, and through it all I could still see that cocky 17-year-old. He was always there. ॐ

"I lived at Friar Park... We had a ball. It was beautiful"

KLAUS VOORMANN

FAB GEAR

THREE CLASSIC VOORMANN PERFORMANCES WITH THE SOLO BEATLES

JOHN LENNON
"I Found Out"
JOHN LENNON/PLASTIC ONO BAND, APPLE, 1970
A raw little rocker featuring Lennon at this most caustic, this hard-won epiphany casts off false prophets, drugs, fame and his parents. The Plastic Ono Band trio are at their most brutally effective, with Voormann's bass driving it all.

GEORGE HARRISON
"Be Here Now"
LIVING IN THE MATERIAL WORLD, APPLE, 1973
Voormann switches to upright bass to complement one of Harrison's most beguiling, soul-searching and vulnerable tracks. His part was recorded in an acoustically superior bathroom at Friar Park. "Then Mal Evans came in, sat on the toilet and flushed in the middle of the song!"

RINGO STARR
"I'm The Greatest"
RINGO, APPLE, 1973
Written by Lennon and sung by Starr in the guise of Billy Shears, this gaudy vaudevillian rocker is dominated by Voormann's swinging bass figure. The sole recording featuring all four members of mythical post-Beatles group The Ladders: Lennon, Harrison, Starr and Voormann.

GINNY WINN/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

"All these nice people..." Klaus Voormann in the studio in LA, where he was then living, 1973

GEORGE SOLO

DARK HORSE

RELEASED 09|12|74

Odds against the favourite. Hobbled by cocaine, heartbreak and "demented Dylan" vocals, George struggles to stay the course.

BY NICK HASTED

GEORGE HARRISON'S material world came crashing down in 1974. He lost his wife and his solo superstardom, and was derided for what *Rolling Stone* called "his disastrous tour and *Dark Horse*, his disastrous album". Both tour and album were doomed when he lost his voice to laryngitis, overwork and overindulgence in brandy and cocaine, as spiritual idealism took a back seat to what he later termed "a bit of a bender". Even America's residual force-field of fervent love for Beatle George also cracked under the strain. *Dark Horse* was the raw and ragged diary.

Harrison's messy split with Pattie Boyd was the source of his emotional turmoil. She had responded to his affairs with two of her own, following a fling with Ronnie Wood by finally leaving with her long-term suitor, Eric Clapton. George and Eric remained friends, as George and Ringo did, after Harrison moved on Maureen Starkey. In terms of incestuous absurdity it was a recording studio soap opera that prefigured *Rumours*.

Harrison meanwhile launched Dark Horse Records, a mini-Apple of similarly quixotic stripe. LPs by Ravi Shankar and Splinter, a group formed to help Harrison refloat the fortunes of the film *Little Malcolm* by working on its music, and the ambitious Music Festival From India European tour all featured him extensively. Announcing the first US tour by a Beatle since 1966 then fanned nostalgic cultural flames George didn't want to satisfy.

Rehearsing for the tour in LA (while frantically finishing the album he was supposed to be promoting at night) proved this Beatle's human frailty. He burned out, and with his voice a husk, he began a 50-date tour. By the time of *Dark Horse*'s December release it was felt to be collateral damage to the condemned concerts, suggesting that the Quiet One had nothing left to say. Still, with its rough edges, the naked autobiography, the mean and depressed lyrics were all new twists in a highly produced and perfectionist career. *Dark Horse* fascinates today because of this harsh, helpless honesty. In contrast to his friend Dylan's poetically elevated *Blood On the Tracks*, recorded almost simultaneously, it's a break-up album brought low by real life.

A new home studio, no longer requiring Harrison to schlep from Oxfordshire to Apple, had been convenient but musically isolating. Ringo and Klaus Voorman were among the comfortably familiar guests who began work in November 1973. Crack session band LA Express were invited for the night after Harrison watched them back Joni Mitchell in April 1974. They jammed out "Hari's On Tour (Express)", a West Coast jazz-funk instrumental which opened the album and defined its new style, as they became the session and tour band nucleus.

The nearest Harrison ever got to Lennon's primal screaming then dominated Side One. "Simply Shady" doesn't bother to defend his guilt in the sad but familiar story of a "bender" and subsequent break-up. "*I was blinded by desire/The elephant turned pink*," he admits, as honky-tonk piano supports his attractive melody and wry vocal. "So Sad" is more

CRITICS' VERDICT

"I approached *Dark Horse* with some trepidation, fearing a lot of whining sitar, thudding tablas and groaning out-of-tune voices. But there ain't none of that. Even "It Is 'He' (Jai Sri Krishna)" is a bit of a groover and that's the most Eastern track on the album. Yep, the Sacred Cowboy has produced a good one."
Brian Harrigan, MM, December 21, 1974

"I appreciate the warning on the cover (for critics to lay off), but I'll repeat that this album is totally colourless. Just stuff and nonsense."
Bob Woffinden, NME, December 21, 1974

lachrymose, with acoustic guitar hinting at "Here Comes the Sun" as he gives up his place in "*the dream we once held*". The 1974 listener might think he was talking about The Beatles as much as Pattie Boyd.

"Bye Bye Love" then sees him hit bottom. Freely adapting the Everly Brothers song alone one night in the LA studio where *Dark Horse* was desperately completed, he veers between the equable "*I hope she's happy/Old Clapper too*" to seething at "*ladies/That push and shove me*". As was more blatantly the case with contemporary B-side "I Don't Care Anymore", it sounds an uncensored, sloshed outpouring. "Māya Love" then couches similar feelings of abandonment in spiritual terms ("Māya" being Sanskrit for "that which is not") over upbeat slide and bluesy Billy Preston keyboards. This concludes the first side of an album with more grit than its predecessor, and more than adequate Harrison work in all departments.

"Ding Dong", though, was deemed symptomatic of a major artist who had lost not just his mojo, but possibly also his mind. Harrison was convinced that this banal singalong, with its sub-"Auld Lang Syne" lyrics and sub-Spector production, would dwarf the previous Christmas's seasonal smashes by Slade and Wizzard. Charles Shaar Murray's *NME* review disabused him, declaring that "no other Moptop has ever sunk to these depths". It slunk into the UK Top 30. "Ding Dong" also introduced the ravaged "Dark Hoarse" voice that tour audiences would soon endure. The title track then squanders its brisk, appealing tune with a growled vocal in which the strain of everything finally becomes all too much. The Dark Horse is made into Harrison's mean, Jumping Jack Flash-style alias, while verses lash out at his ex. "*Fucking watch it,*" Macho George half-jokingly mutters.

Ron Wood co-write "Far East Man" is a slick quiet storm, notable for studio chat in which Harrison offers it to Sinatra "for your next live album" (doubtless twitting Frank's reverential crediting of "Something" to Lennon and McCartney). Like the closing, wobble-board-heavy mantra "It Is 'He' (Jai Sri Krishna)", the song attempts the more accepting stance of previous Harrison albums. But as *Dark Horse* kept confessing, and its humbled maker told *Rolling Stone* in 1979: "I'm a very poor example of a spiritual person."

The three consecutive chart-toppers that preceded it, coupled with feverish tour anticipation, ensured *Dark Horse* initially sold well in the US. It didn't chart at all in the UK, signalling a general commercial decline. As for the tour, a half-hour set by Ravi Shankar's band, a solo spot for Billy Preston plus all Harrison's best-loved hits sounds an ambitious and, in retrospect, admirable show, anticipating the variety of Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue. A cynical, post-split rewrite of "Something" barked "like a demented Bob Dylan on an off-night", as the *LA Times* put it, was, though, unforgivable.

Harrison was permanently reduced by the year of *Dark Horse*. But the album's unguarded bitterness revealed his spirituality's flipside. It's the sound of a man with earthly matters hobbling his every step. ॐ

TRACKMARKS

1. Hari's On Tour (Express) ★★
2. Simply Shady ★★★★
3. So Sad ★★★
4. Bye Bye Love ★★★
5. Māya Love ★★★
6. Ding Dong, Ding Dong ★★★
7. Dark Horse ★★★★
8. Far East Man ★★★
9. It Is 'He' (Jai Sri Krishna) ★★★

Label: Apple
Produced by: George Harrison
Recordedat: FPSHOT, Oxfordshire, and A&M Studios, Los Angeles
Personnel: George Harrison (vocals, guitar, drums, bass, electric piano, gubgubbi, Moog), Billy Preston (keys), Tom Scott (sax, flute, organ), Robben Ford (guitar, backing vocals), Mick Jones, Alvin Lee (guitar), Nicky Hopkins, Roger Kellaway, Gary Wright (piano), Willie Weeks, Max Bennett, Klaus Voorman (bass), Ringo Starr, Jim Keltner, John Guerin, Andy Newmark (drums), Emil Richards (percussion), Jim Horn, Chuck Findley (flute), Lon Van Eaton, Derrek Van Eaton (backing vocals)
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 4

"Everybody is very friendly"

Late 1974. George prepares to play live again – his first tour since 1966. At a press conference, he fields questions about divorce ("I'm very happy about it"), new music, and – of course – The Beatles. But can he cook? "I'm a vegetarian," says George. "That's why I'm so pale and thin."

MELODY MAKER 2|11|74

GEORGE HARRISON bounded into the ornate conference room of the Beverly Wilshire Hotel and was immediately surrounded by three dozen photographers madly clamouring for pictures.

For almost 10 minutes, the scene looked like some parody of a bad Hollywood movie. Finally, amid jeers and calls from the "working press", the photographers retreated to the back of the room and the formal questioning began.

Looking relaxed and displaying a fine sense of humour, Harrison acted every inch the 10-year veteran of superstardom that he is. The accent is toned down, the barbs are not quite so sharp, but the droll wit that delighted back in 1964 still managed to find its way into the proceedings.

His public relations people had announced that this would be George's ONLY contact with the press during his upcoming tour and consequently everyone was out in force, from television commentators to women's page columnists. One young rock'n'roll writer commented that if a bomb dropped on the building, the entire LA press corps would be wiped out.

On November 2, the George Harrison tour will begin in Vancouver and will include approximately 50 concerts in 27 cities over a period of seven weeks. This marks his first US tour since the halcyon days of The Beatles – The Concert For Bangladesh notwithstanding. Permits, visas and drug charges had kept Harrison away, he explained.

Joining Harrison on the tour will be Ravi Shankar accompanied by some 18 Indian musicians, complete with three drummers and "back-up" singers.

Playing with Harrison will be Tom Scott (saxes and woodwinds), Chuck Findley (trumpet and trombone), Robben Ford (guitar), Andy Newmark (drums), Emil Richards (percussion), Willie Weeks (bass), and Billy Preston (keyboards).

No press conference would be complete without inside jokes and one or two buffoons. The inside joke was provided when one LA rock'n'roll writer asked, "How did you find America..." There was just a beat and then everyone laughed and silently filled in, "Turn left at Greenland."

The remark came from a woman who insisted on asking questions for her "women" readers, as if women were creatures from outer space who could not be interested in factual information like everyone else. It was she who asked about Harrison's favourite food and whether his wife could cook.

The conference started 45 minutes late and lasted just over an hour, at which point Harrison departed for a recording session, driving a Mercedes.

How do you feel about going through the interview process again, since it's been a long time since you spoke to the press?
It's like the old days. All the people are here 10 years later, and as mad as ever. I'd like to take a picture of you. Are you with the press or ➤

MARK SULLIVAN/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

"It's definitely not Bangladesh take two": Harrison launches his Dark Horse Tour with Ravi Shankar at a press conference, Beverly Wilshire Hotel, LA, October 23, 1974

something? You're lucky to have me. I was up 'til five or six in the morning.

After all these years, why have you decided to return to America in the role of a performer?

I've been back here many times over the last few years. This is the first time I've been back to work. It's the first time I've had an H-1 visa since 1971. The tour is the big plan of the moment. I don't have time to think what I'm going to do after the tour. Once the tour's over I'll probably collapse or have a rest.

What was the reason you didn't have the H-1?

I had the same problem as John Lennon. I was busted for marijuana in 1967...

What is the possibility of you and the rest of The Beatles getting back together?

It's a very slim possibility at the moment. Everybody is enjoying being individuals. We were boxed up together for 10 years. Personally I enjoy playing with this band, the band I have on tour.

You said in your bio that meeting The Beatles was one of your biggest influences in your musical life.

Biggest break in my career was getting into The Beatles in 1963. In retrospect, the biggest break since then was getting out of them.

What are your feelings and anticipation for the upcoming tour?

Well, if I had more time I'd be panic stricken, but I don't have the time to worry about it.

Do you have an album ready to coincide with the tour?

It's almost in the can. I have a few things I want to do before Saturday night. Some of the basic tracks I did last November have Keltner, Ringo, Gary Wright, Klaus Voormann, and some of the tracks I did this year have Willy Weeks, Andy Newmark, Tom Scott, the people in the band. The album is titled *Dark Horse*.

Is there any reason why Keltner, Klaus Voormann or Eric Clapton aren't touring with you?

Eric's out on his own. Klaus has been living in America, so I haven't seen him all year. During that time I've met Andy Newmark and Willie Weeks. It's just a time for a change. They performed on the album 'cos they were there at the time. Andy Newmark and Willie Weeks, bass and drums, I didn't meet 'til July this year.

Are you getting divorced?

No, that's as silly as marriage.

What kind of material will you be doing on the tour?

A couple of old tunes and a lot of new tunes. The old tunes seem to have a slightly different arrangements; I'm going to do "My Sweet Lord" and "Give Me Love" in slightly different variations. It should be much more loose.

I'd like to talk about the Indian Music Festival that you were involved with.

Yeah, there was two separate parts there. The music festival in India was something I was planning for years, since about 1967, although it's hard to get about 18 or 20 musicians and put them in a position where they perform together. All I ended up with was forming a foundation that would sponsor a few other things.

Ravi has just completed a European tour there, which we recorded and filmed in the Albert Hall. Now he's joining in the tour. He'll be playing some of the pieces from the tour that are somewhat lighter than heavy raga. It's not a few ragas for an hour and a half, but smaller pieces with musicians, which should be sensational.

There should be a point in the show where we all play together – guitars, saxophones, drums, bass, and all the Indian musicians.

How has religion helped you create better music?

It helps me to be a bit better. Consequently any thing is a bit better. I will be after this tour sharper playing the guitar. Another reason for doing the tour is that I was turning into a lawyer or an accountant. I wanted to try being a musician.

Allen Klein is suing The Beatles for 30 million dollars. How is that affecting you?

That's all right. To tell you the truth, there's a whole lot of money in receivership since Paul McCartney sued us, and actually it's fortunate he did sue us since nobody could spend it.

What do you see as the role of the entertainer in working with causes and charities?

I don't think it's particularly an entertainer's job. He does what he can. And I do it through music. It's not isolated to musicians.

Will the concert be formulated like in Bangladesh?

No, it has to have some sort of format, 'cos there is a certain amount of time that you have to play – the unions – and you have to kick the people out for the second show. You can't run over in time, so we must have a format.

Will Ravi open the show?

No, I will be opening the show. It's definitely not Bangladesh take two, if that's what people are thinking. Nothing like that.

What are your hopes for Dark Horse Records?

I don't want it to turn into Kinney. Small.

Any new acts you're going to get on the label?

I've been here a week, and if I sign all the people who've given me tapes I'd be bigger than RCA and Kinney put together. Unfortunately I don't have time to listen to them.

How did you come to work with Splinter (new Dark Horse artists)?

The Splinter thing happened when I was making a movie. I was raising the money for a movie to be made called *Little Malcolm And His Struggle Against The Eunuchs*, and there's a scene where they needed a couple of singers in a nightclub. A friend of mine, Mal Evans, brought these guys down. I liked their material and we did an album.

You were married – does your wife cook, or did she when you were?

First of all, I don't have a wife any more. Anyway, she used to cook for me sometimes, and I learned how to cook myself. I cook vegetarian Indian food, although I like other food as well. I'm a vegetarian, don't eat fish, chicken or meat. That's why I'm so pale and thin.

George, what charities are you working with on this tour?

One concert in San Francisco is for the Haight-Ashbury Medical Clinic. There's a brochure which will be like a programme that gives all the information. Institutes of religion and health, ones for a hospital in the Mississippi Delta. I'm giving a concert in LA for the Self Realisation Fellowship. It was founded by Pararanz Yoga Anda. He happened to be a big influence in my life. I'd like to repay him in a small way.

Are sales down for the concert?

No.

What's your relationship with John and Paul now?

It's very good. I haven't seen John since he's been in the States. I spoke to him a lot on the telephone. He's in great shape. It's like we've gone around in a cycle and at the beginning again. I met Paul recently and everybody is very friendly. It doesn't mean everybody is going to form a band.

Do you think the publicity from this tour will lead to the re-release of the *Raga* movie?

I am not sure it actually ever got released completely. In a few places. It depends on people's interest. The film industry is like the record industry 10 years ago. Very difficult to get a look in. My personal opinion is it needs a kick in the arse. It's controlled by those who own the theatres and distribution network. If you don't work on Maggie's Farm then you don't get your movie on.

Have you ever thought of touring Mexico?

I wouldn't mind. I just believe there are a bunch of loonies there. I'll go anywhere. This is really a good test. I either finish the tour ecstatically happy – "I want to go on tour" – or I'll end up going back to my cave for another five years.

In retrospect, looking at all the accomplishments you and The Beatles have done, which do you personally consider as your crowning glory?

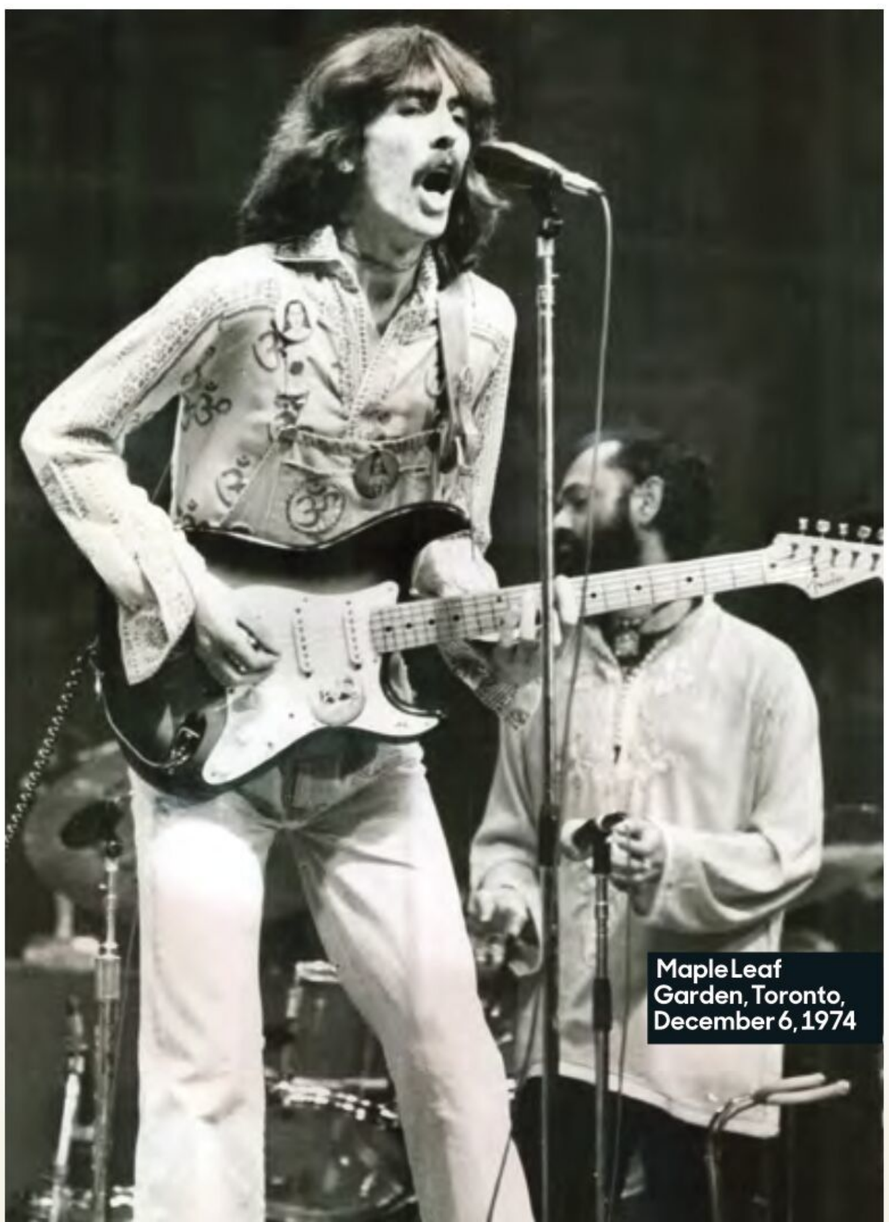
As a musician I don't think I've got that yet. As an individual just being able to sit here today and be relatively sane is probably the biggest accomplishment.

Will you tour England and Europe?

I'd like to. I tried to squeeze in a concert before Christmas, although all the places were booked out. The feeling in the band was that we should do a gig in London, 13 of them. Let's tour England, let's tour Japan. I want to go everywhere. This year there's too much to do and not enough time.

Can you see a time when you give up music?

I can see a time when I give up this sort of



Maple Leaf Garden, Toronto, December 6, 1974

REG INNELL/TORONTO STAR VIA GETTY IMAGES)

Harrison at the White House, December 13, 1974 – with Billy Preston to his right, his father behind him and Ravi Shankar and President Ford's son Jack to his left

madness, but everything is based on music. It is difficult. It's also good practice, as they say, to be in the world but not of the world. It's like you can go to the Himalayas and miss it completely or be stuck in New York and be very spiritual.

Why did you decide to tour Canada at the same time?

A lot depends on Bill Graham. He's got to try and work out a way to get around the country where the halls are available. I decided originally that I was going to do eight or ten places, going on a train. Now it's escalated to 50 concerts. It takes so long to build into the motion that I might as well cover as many things in one shot.

Can you tell me what direction your music is going through?

I haven't got a clue. It's gettin' a bit funkier since Willy Weeks and all of them joined.

Did you play a big part on the new Ringo album, like the last one?

No. I haven't heard a thing on Ringo's new album. He's been over here. The last time he came over just to do a few demos, and we all ended up here fighting Allen Klein.

How did you select charities for which you will be doing the shows?

I have a few people who run all over the place checking, and after that they bring me back a list of people and give me a list of permutations and possibilities. "Yes – do it for them..."

Are there any plans for a live recording of the show?

I hope so, yeah, we're going to record it.

What have you been doing in the last year, since *Living In The Material World* came out?

Been doing some tracks on my own. The Splinter album, Ravi's ballet album, to India for two months and organised the Music Festival for India which was just completed. A million things.

Are you ever amazed about how much The Beatles still mean to people?

Not really. I mean, it's nice. I realise The Beatles did fill a space in the '60s. All the people The Beatles meant something to have grown up. It's like anything you grow up with – you get attached to things.

I understand The Beatles in many ways did nice things, and it's appreciated the people still like them. They want to hold on to something. People are afraid of change. You can't live in the past.

Have you seen The Beatles play in London?

Do you mean John, Paul, George, Harry, Ringo and Stigwood? No, I haven't had a chance to see it. Conflicting reports. I'd like to see it when I get a day off. Some people say Brian Epstein comes off terrible and some say like an angel.

"Eric's great. I'd rather she be with him than some dope"

GEORGE HARRISON

What are the concepts and goals of Dark Horse Records?

There isn't really a concept or goal. The goal in life is to manifest our divinity. Because each one of us is potentially divine. All we can do is try and do that, and hope that influences our work.

Who are the contemporary artists you admire?

In music, there are so many. Smokey Robinson from the old Miracles. I'm madly in love with Smokey Robinson. When The Beatles first came to America, everyone was amazed that we liked Tamla Motown. I like a lot of guitar players. I like Dickey Betts [*Allman Brothers*], I like Ry Cooder, and I hope Warner Brothers sell a few more of his albums. The Stones, I like the Stones. Variety is the spice of life.

Are you involved with any serious negotiations to get The Beatles back together for one night?

It's all a fantasy, putting The Beatles back together again. If we ever do that it's because everyone is broke, than doing it 'cos I'd rather have Willy Weeks on bass rather than Paul McCartney. With all respect to Paul, since The Beatles I've been in a box, taking me years to be able to play with other musicians.

Since I made *All Things Must Pass*, it was nice for me to be able to play with other musicians. Having played with other musicians, I don't think The Beatles were that good.

Ringo has the best backbeat I've ever heard. Him and Levon Helm of The Band are the best drummers I've ever heard. They don't play technically, no drum solos, just play.

Ringo will play a great backbeat 24 hours a day. Paul is a fine bass player; he's a bit overpowering at times. John has gone through his scene. To tell you the truth, I'd join a band with John Lennon any day, but I couldn't join a band with Paul McCartney. That's not personal, but from a musical point of view. John's new record is lovely.

Did you make a musical rebuttal to "Layla" on the new album?

That's a bit nasty. I'd like to sort that one out. Eric Clapton has been a close friend for years. I'm very happy about it. Because he's great. I'd rather she be with him than some dope.

On the tour, will you welcome any superstars jamming with you?

It depends. I hardly know the tunes myself. People who jump up jamming are the ones you don't want to.

What about the Maharishi?

I have a lot of respect for him. He gave me help and plugged me in to a method of being able to contact that reservoir of energy which is within us all. Pure consciousness. I experienced it. He showed me how to reach that. Everything else is just words; beyond the intellect is an experience you have to have in order to know. ॐ

DAVID HUME KENNERLY/GETTY IMAGES

GEORGE SOLO

EXTRA TEXTURE (READ ALL ABOUT IT)

RELEASED 22|09|75

Ohnothimagen! A dark mood, post-*Dark Horse*, inspires a swift and soulful consolidation. BY SHARON O'CONNELL

THERE'S no doubt that 1974's exhausting and difficult tour of North America (45 dates in 10 weeks), coupled with the slamming of *Dark Horse* by both the US and UK press and its local chart failure hit George Harrison hard. Add to that the wrangles over what should be done with Apple Records, which saw him "stuck in a limbo" with his ex-bandmates until January of 1976, and the picture, as 1975 opens, is of a battle-worn and thoroughly despondent former Beatle.

"When I got off the plane and back home, I went into the garden and I was so relieved," he told Derek Taylor in *I Me Mine*. "That was the nearest I got to a nervous breakdown. I couldn't even go into the house." Three months later, however, Harrison was back in the States and recording a new album.

Why the rush? It's an obvious question, but while he was in LA on business, he – mindful of not wasting money – decided to use studio time made available when Dark Horse band Splinter suddenly cancelled a session. There was also the pressing question of restoring his reputation in a hurry – which was far more important than recuperation. Undoubtedly his decision to tap Motown soul-pop for *Extra Texture* was a risky move – whatever Harrison delivered would inevitably be judged unfavourably against *All Things Must Pass*.

"With this new album all I want is to sing the tunes and do them as warm and as simple as possible," he told New York's WNEW-FM, a month before its release. "I don't see my music any more as being Top 20; it matters more to me that I can sing it better, play it better with less orchestration and get over more feeling."

If there's a whiff of defensiveness in that remark about commercial success it's understandable, given *Dark Horse*'s reception, but with the keyboard-dominated follow-up Harrison seems set on correction, not only mixing upbeat pop tracks in with more ruminative ballads but also avoiding any mention of Hinduism and Indian philosophy. For the desired warmth and simplicity, he channelled Smokey Robinson, whom he'd long been a fan of "just because musically he's so sweet – he makes me feel good". This feelgood balm was applied to half of *Extra Texture*, which runs over 42 minutes and represents both Harrison's final record under his Apple contract and the label's last studio release.

All the songs were written in late October of 1974 save for the buoyant and lyrically guileless "You", which dates from the *All Things Must Pass* sessions and was intended for an album Harrison planned to record with Phil Spector but which never surfaced. It was written for Ronnie Spector, whose (uncredited) woah-oh-ohs can be heard just before the fadeout, and features Leon Russell on piano. Once resurrected and finished in 1975, it became the album's opener and hit No 20 on the US *Billboard* chart. As most of the set was recorded in LA, Harrison embedded himself in the city's notoriously hedonistic

CRITICS' VERDICT

"*Extra Texture* is more than just a good new album, it's a restatement of the fundamentals we should all cherish. A lovely collection of songs by a musician with integrity. Bravo!"
Ray Coleman, MM, September 6, 1975

"Though *Extra Texture* is by no means the Harrison revival many might have hoped for, it's still several leagues superior to Hari's more recent efforts; and just like *All Things Must Pass* would have made a great single album, so *ET* would make a more than commendable single side."
Neil Spencer, NME, September 20, 1975

TRACKMARKS

1. You ★★★
2. The Answer's At The End ★★★
3. This Guitar (Can't Keep From Crying) ★★★★
4. Ooh Baby (You Know That I Love You) ★★★
5. World Of Stone ★★★
6. A Bit More Of You ★★
7. Can't Stop Thinking About You ★★
8. Tired Of Midnight Blue ★★★★
9. Grey Cloudy Lies ★★★
10. His Name Is Legs (Ladies And Gentlemen) ★★★

Label: Apple
Recorded at: A&M Studios, LA; Friar Park Studio, Henley-on-Thames; Abbey Road Studios, London
Produced by: George Harrison
Personnel includes: George Harrison (guitars, vocals, synth, piano), Jesse Ed Davis (guitar on "Grey Cloudy Lies"), Klaus Voormann, Paul Stallworth, Willie Weeks and Carl Radle (bass), Jim Keltner, Jim Gordon and Andy Newmark (drums), David Foster (synth, organ, piano), Leon Russell and Nicky Hopkins (piano), Billy Preston (electric piano), Jim Horn (saxophone), Chuck Findley and Tom Scott (horns)
Highest chart position: UK 16; US 8

music scene for several months. It was not the most positive of moves either personally or professionally, according to old hand Klaus Voormann. In 2014 he said, "When they do too much cocaine, people lose their reliability... It was not the old George."

Harrison's faith was also wavering at the time (as he outlines in "World Of Stone"), and this wider existential wobble might explain why the record presents more like the documenting of an artistic regroup after defeat than a triumphant push into new territory. Still, his defining slide guitar appears on just two tracks, "Tired Of Midnight Blue" and the darkly groovy honky-tonk appeal to humanism that is "This Guitar (Can't Keep from Crying)", which features a wry swipe at *Rolling Stone* and is an obvious iteration of "While My Guitar Gently Weeps".

Of a similar introspective nature are the philosophical, strings-augmented "The Answer's At The End", with its faint emanation of 1970's "Isn't It A Pity", and piano ballad "Grey Cloudy Lies". This fleetingly echoes "Hey Jude"'s keys lift and has a light touch that belies a dark mood, indicating the extreme pressure Harrison was feeling: "*Now I only want to be with no pistol at my brain/But at times it gets so lonely, could go insane, could lose my aim.*" Expressing ennui rather than despair is the piano-driven, slide-flecked funk rock of "Tired Of Midnight Blue". As Harrison told BBC Radio 1 in 1975: "Those nights you go out and wish you hadn't – it's one of those."

Harrison admitted that it "left a lot to be desired for me too"

In contrast are the sweet, Smokey Robinson-indebted slowie "Ooh Baby (You Know That I Love You)" and the loose, falsetto-affected "Can't Stop Thinking About You", which suggests a refrain in search of a song. The album's wild card is "His Name Is Legs (Ladies And Gentlemen)", a cantering, brass-blasted mix of West Coast blues rock, psychedelic/comic pop and music hall, written about Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band drummer Larry "Legs" Smith, whose babbling can be heard in the background, if not understood.

Looking back on *Extra Texture* in an interview in 1977, Harrison admitted that it "left a lot to be desired for me too, and that was due to circumstances beyond my control". He didn't elaborate, but it's fair to assume the knock-on effects of the American tour, depression, a temporary loss of his faith and badly wounded self-confidence arising from what he saw as personally motivated criticism were what he had in mind.

In the BBC interview, Harrison was asked if a time might come when he'd be tired of writing songs and making records. A long pause, heavy with consideration, speaks volumes before he answers "not really". Clearly not – six solo studio albums followed, two of them bagging higher UK chart positions than *Extra Texture*. But it was critical rehabilitation that Harrison needed: in 1976, *Thirty-Three & ⅓* delivered just that.

“I’d rather be an ex-Beatle than an ex-Nazi!”

Read all about it! With *Extra Texture* finished and the Dark Horse posse galloping into view, George tries to put The Beatles and the “lunatic asylum” of Apple Records behind him. With the help of RAY COLEMAN, he surveys the new scene. “Heavy metal? Is that what they call it?”

MELODY MAKER 06|09|75

LARRY HULST/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

GEORGE HARRISON went to see the celebrated play *John, Paul, George, Ringo... And Bert* in London last week. He left the theatre at the interval.

He could not stand the pain of seeing himself and the Beatle years being re-enacted so uncannily, and he questioned the fundamental need for the show.

The first ex-Beatle to view the play, he had been persuaded to go by close friend Derek Taylor. “George found it hard to watch, and I found it hard work sitting with him,” Taylor said. “It was a genuine form of suffering for him.”

It was hardly surprising that George didn’t enjoy it – after all, he was hardly in love with the Beatles story while it was happening.

“All Things Must Pass”, wrote George Harrison as his epitaph to end that era. But the statement was too naive by half. Maybe that’s how George wanted it at the time, but the ‘spectre’ of The Beatles, which is how he viewed it, just wouldn’t go away. Some things not only fail to pass, but will stand forever, monuments to an important landmark which shaped the future.

The Beatles were like that. Even now, 12 years after they changed the world, they are still something extra special to be studied by today’s youth as well as remembered by the 30-pluses. Primarily because they came through as a force, which stood for something, as opposed to ‘product’, which has been dished up for too long by a music industry desperate to maintain that ➤

A different strummer: live at the Cow Palace, San Francisco, November 6, 1974

impetus. And with the recent trends towards nostalgia and re-evaluations of pop's past glories, their breakthrough and their history shows little sign of being forgotten.

It wasn't so much exactly what they achieved which brought them fame, although God only knows that was enough; it was the period in which they came upon us which allowed them to make such an impact. Consider this: when The Beatles arrived, Tamla Motown was virtually unheard of by the public, The Animals were making quite a stir with their first four-minute single, Bob Dylan was struggling through Greenwich Village, Cliff Richard was Britain's top solo singer, playing clean, wholesome and religious, and Helen Shapiro was the nearest we got to a home-grown singer with funk.

If The Beatles changed all that, it was as much through the chemistry of their four personalities as their music. Their records were excellent, certainly, but the collective personality of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr was especially electric. We'll wait forever for a parallel.

And they have remained among the heaviest names in popular music since The Beatles split [*as a touring band*] in 1966, with a final concert at San Francisco's Cow Palace.

George was never an enthusiastic Beatle. He rated himself a musician first and pop star last. He disliked the screaming of fans and resented their intrusion into his privacy; he was the first to get a house with electrically operated gates to keep out fans; he was always more concerned with stepping ahead in style and quality on the next album than he was with reaching No 1 in the chart with a new single.

While handsome Paul had the unfailing commercial ear and waspish John the knife-edged wit – a classic combination which clinched the group's success – brooding George was repeatedly grumbling that their music should be more adventurous, that they should spend more time in the studios, that fans, however young, should be made to follow their lead.

Through his openly expressed disenchantment with autograph signing and all that was entailed by being a quarter of the biggest attraction in the world, he was regularly rumoured to be on the verge of quitting The Beatles.

Partly because of these rumours, partly because of the natural tensions of such a massive act, but mainly because he trusts few people anyway, George became a recluse when The Beatles and Apple finally dissolved into separate compartments. John, Paul and Ringo made their exorcising speeches, but George went into hibernation. His only contact with the world outside his Henley-on-Thames mansion was among musicians.

He's been a mighty long time coming out of the shell, but now at last George is ready to become more outward. Also, he works cyclically. The Beatles split in 1966. In New York's Madison Square Garden in 1971, George was able to use his long-established personal credibility as a musician, rather than as an ex-Beatle, to stage the magnificent Bangladesh charity concert, wrenching a denim-clad Bob Dylan out of hiding and assembling Eric Clapton, Ravi Shankar and many, many more. That was a remarkable act of faith in George by musicians and one of rock's finest events.

TODAY, about five years on, and George is stepping out again. A new album, a nervous readiness to plan a tour, a general interest in things wider than his traditional favourite of Indian music and culture. Above all a willingness to contemplate the past with The Beatles and since, and to place it in context. George Harrison is back, intact.

On Bob Dylan...

GEORGE HARRISON and John Lennon were among the first British musicians to pour praise on the emergent Bob Dylan in 1964. Today George says:

"Bob Dylan is still the most consistent artist there is. Even his stuff which people loathe, I like... Every single thing he does represents something that's him. He may write better songs tomorrow, sing high on this album and low on another, go electric or acoustic, go weird or whatever, but the basic thing that causes all this change is an incredible character named Bob Dylan. I've seen him quite a bit recently – he's the looniest person I've ever met."

This summer afternoon, he's sitting in the Chelsea room of his record company HQ, Dark Horse, mild mannered and drinking one glass of beer.

"How's he looking now?" people have asked me since the interview, as if I'd been to view something they'd ceased to believe existed. They're either expecting him to have faded away – in itself a commentary on his seclusion from any media during the past few years – or to have become so obsessed about things Indian that Westerners no longer have any point of contact. Well, George Harrison, mid-'75 version, is slimmer than I've ever seen him, but then I've never seen a stout vegetarian. ("I won't allow meat in my house," he says.) His complexion is sallow, he wears small earrings à la early Keith Richard. He appears laconic, relaxed, and even poses for pictures – something I have never seen him do in 12 years of Beatling.

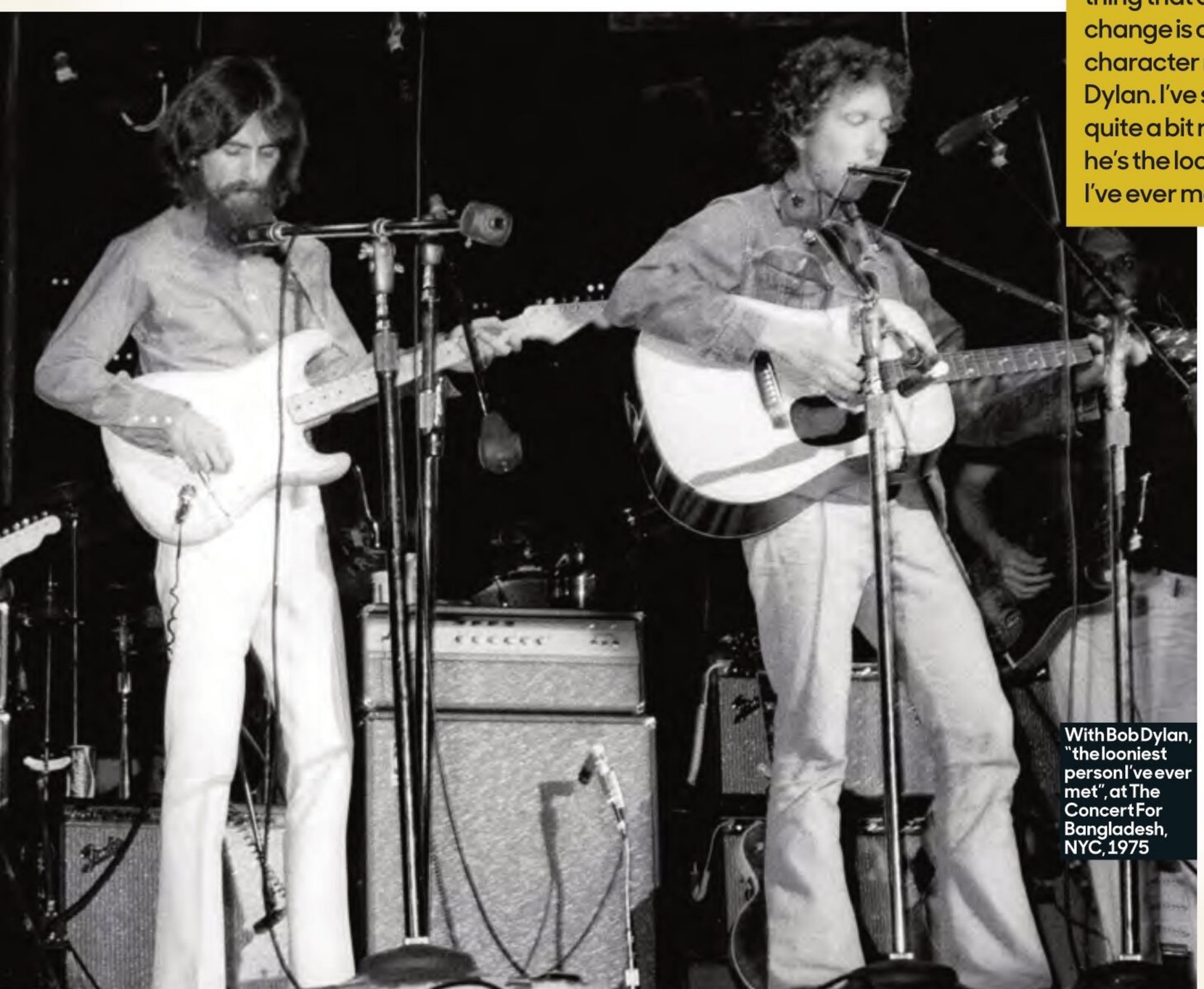
He'd not long returned from Los Angeles, where he'd seen Bob Marley & The Wailers three times at the Roxy Theatre – "best thing I've seen in 10 years. Marley reminds me so much of Dylan in the early days, playing guitar as if he's so new to it. And his rhythm, you know, it's so simple yet so beautiful. I could watch the Wailers all night." In Los Angeles, George had also seen the Stones and Carlos Santana and been to shows with Ringo; earlier this year he'd seen plenty of John in the same city; he had also attended Paul McCartney's star-packed party aboard the *Queen Mary* – so relations between the four were fine, he avowed.

"After all, we went through it all together and we were all very young when The Beatles happened, but we've still got plenty in common even though we're different people – naturally, we're about 10 years older!"

George enjoyed American trips: "California unwinds me, to the point where I can get things I'm thinking of into perspective, while New York – well, some of my best songs were written there. It's great in that it gives you 360-degree vision, New York."

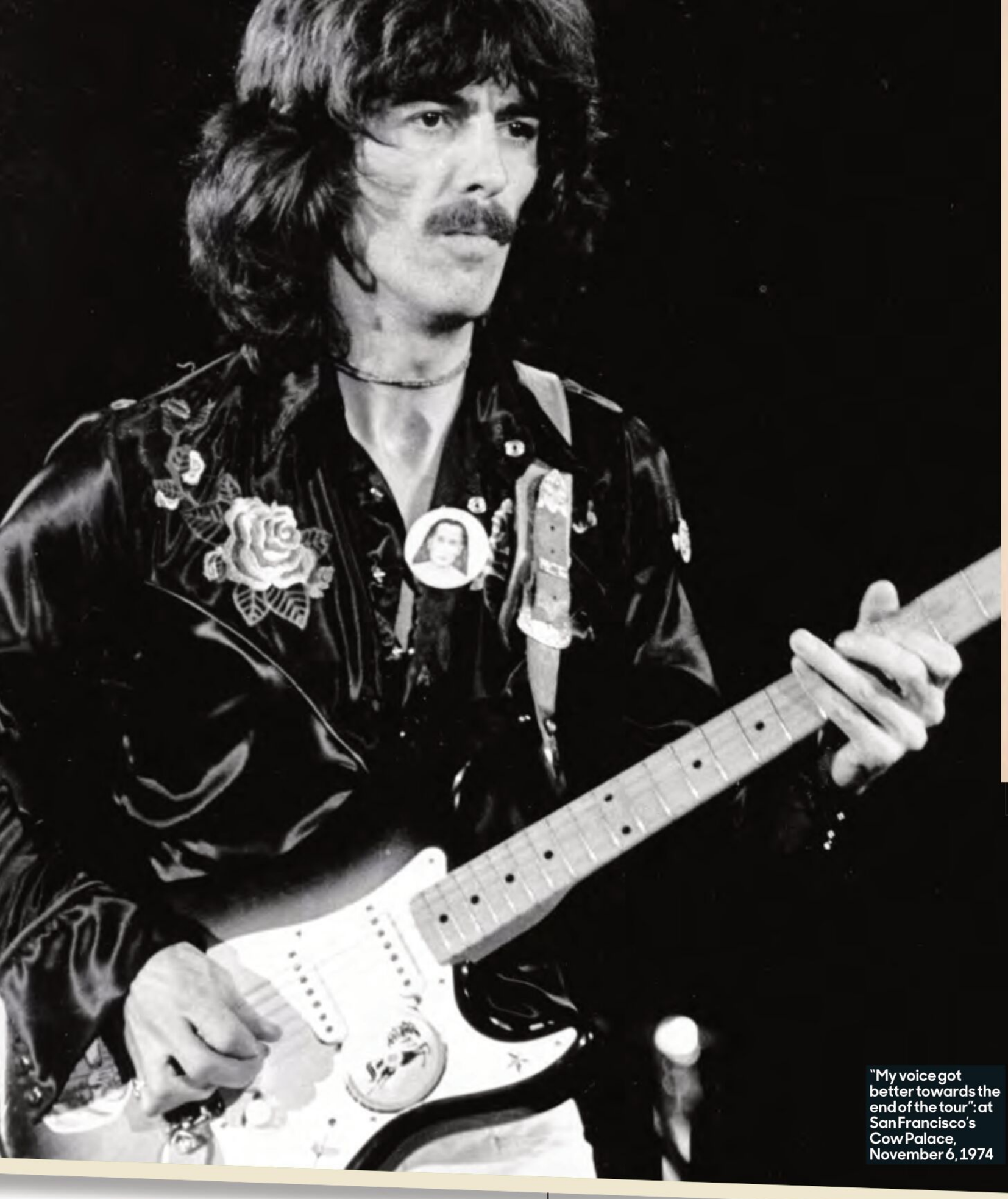
The new Harrison album, *Extra Texture* – out next week – is historic because it marks the end of Apple as a label. The album comes out under the banner "Apple/Capitol/EMI", and Harrison feels a twinge of sentiment about the winding up of Apple as a recording force.

"One incidental and perhaps sentimental point for us is that it looks like it could be the last Apple record for ever, unless somebody else forms a company called Apple," he said. "Paul's already done a deal for his future which puts him on Capitol for the world – good luck, Paul. It doesn't look like Ringo or John will be doing another

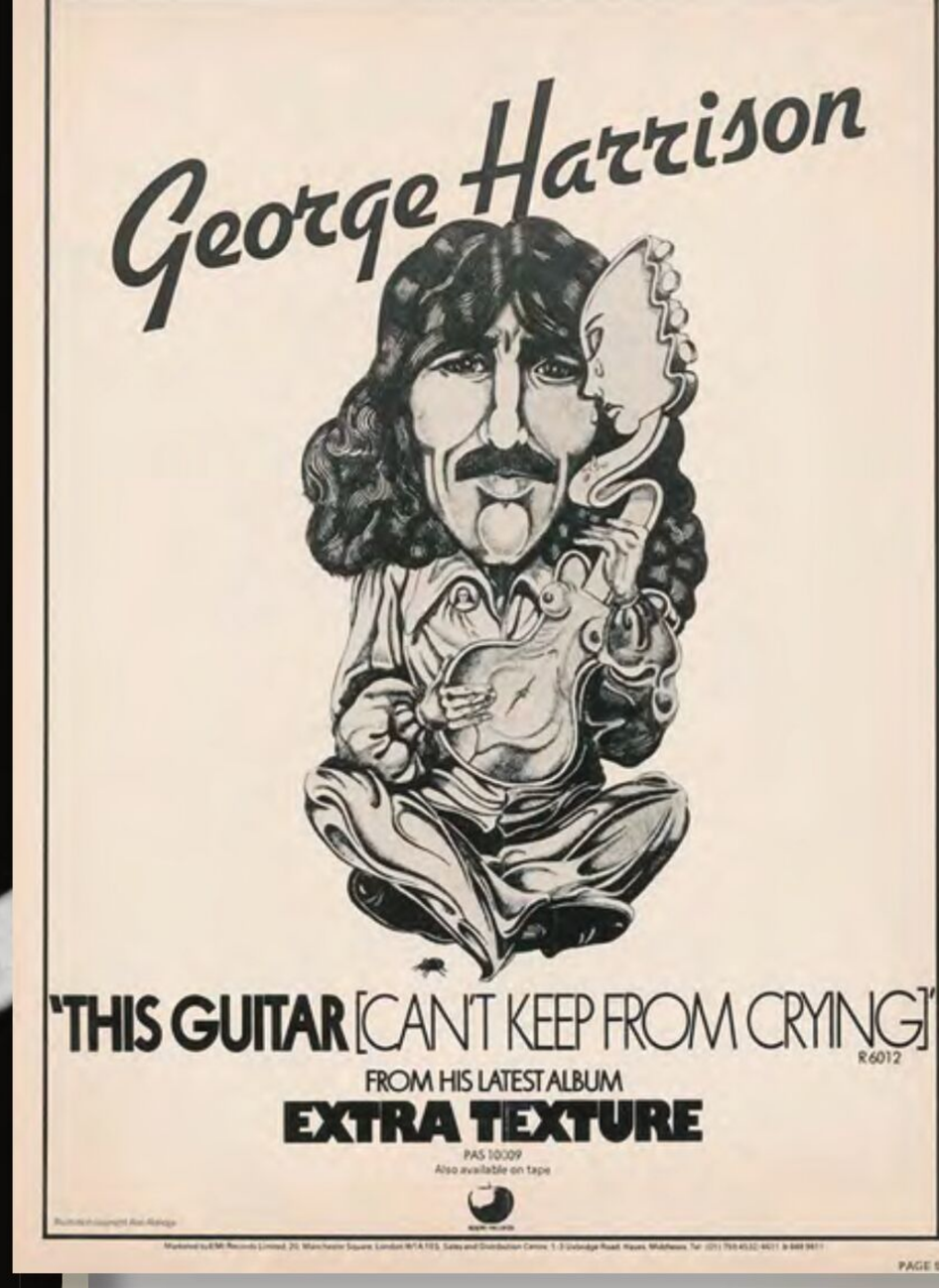


With Bob Dylan, "the looniest person I've ever met", at The Concert For Bangladesh, NYC, 1975

ZUMA PRESS, INC. / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



"My voice got better towards the end of the tour": at San Francisco's Cow Palace, November 6, 1974



album this year. So I look like being the last one on Apple. Funny, the first Apple record was the music from *Wonderwall*, which I wrote – quite a coincidence."

Regrets, he'd had a few: "Yeah, I feel a bit of sentiment about it, because Apple did a few good things, you know. We were always bugged by business, though, right from the start, and business as opposed to the artistic side is always a problem for everybody.

"Me, I was never really interested in Apple shops or anything else. During the whole Apple period, I was always mainly interested in working in the studio, recording. John and Paul and Ringo would have some great ideas, but at that time I couldn't be bothered to follow through. I suppose my attitude didn't help.

"The business became an incredible headache. Everything that could go wrong for us with Apple went wrong. And yet it was a great boon for some people – the Badfingers and the Billy Prestons of the world. It went crazy in the end, Apple, but it did give some good people an outlet. That's why I'm here now with Dark Horse Records – Apple didn't shake my faith that much. Good musicians are worth encouraging."

George, for all his denials of interest, has a fairly shrewd business brain and was by far the most money-conscious Beatle, often quizzing Brian Epstein about where the cash was going.

Will Dark Horse, then, learn from Apple's disaster areas and become a thriving, long-life company? "Oh yeah, definitely. There's still areas of business I can't be bothered with, and there's no way I could get bothered with some aspects of running the company without losing sight of what I was originally supposed to be – a musician. All four Beatles were diverted from being musicians for such a long time through all the business problems of Apple, but now what all four of us are doing independently has gained from those experiences.

"We all make mistakes. Apple was a very big one, perhaps"
GEORGE HARRISON

"We all make mistakes. Apple was a very big one, perhaps, but that's what life's all about. You learn from your experience."

So what's the fundamental aim of Dark Horse – to champion new talent as well as to make money? "Yes," he said quickly. "That's what all record companies are about. New talent is the strength of any label." But he was quick to add that John and Paul's New York press conference in 1967, launching Apple and saying the door was open for all new worthwhile talent, had catastrophic results. He wanted to stress that while Dark Horse was looking for talent, its attitude wasn't so philanthropic as Apple had been.

"Remember, the basic thought behind Apple in those days was that we resented marvellous musicians or singers having to go to the very big, established record companies and go down on their knees. That's what we, The Beatles, had had to do with EMI, and so we said the first thing we'd do when we got a bit of money would be to try to beat this part of the system, at least. So many really good musicians had told us they couldn't get a break, make any records, and it made us furious.

"But our 'open door' policy was proved impossible to run. We were flooded with every person imaginable who could play an instrument or sing a note! We had to clamp down on that, because Apple just became a lunatic asylum.

"So Dark Horse will be run pretty tightly. I don't want to be a Kinney or an RCA or anything like that – I won't have thousands of artists. In one way it's similar to the idea behind Apple, in that most artists we've got at the moment have come into my life without me looking for them. That's the funny thing. The friendship thing comes into it quite strongly for me – and it works both ways round.

"For instance, Jim Keltner didn't want to tell me about his band because he didn't like the idea of using his friendship to get his band a gig, so I got to sign Keltner's band from meeting the piano player, which is slightly crazy when you consider the friendship between Keltner and me and the fact that all those albums ago I was putting 'Jim Keltner fan club' on my album sleeves. And he's hesitant about coming to see me for a gig!

"There's a certain amount of talent that circulates around, and OK it's commercial, some of it, but I'm not signing anything just through it being commercial. Basically, the people who join Dark Horse are important to me. Maybe, in some ways, a little more than music, because I wouldn't like to get involved with somebody who just happened to be a fantastic singer or something, ➤

LARRY HULST/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

but who I personally didn't like. Some record companies have a bunch of artists whom they don't really like as people – then it creates all this bad feeling, but I must have a decent and friendly relationship with the artist."

Five acts are due to issue albums on Dark Horse in the next month: Splinter, who have already scored some success, have a new album produced by George's friend, the noted American leader Tom Scott; Jiva, a California-based quartet whose album is produced by Stewart Levine, who worked with Minnie Riperton and the Crusaders; a new American band called Attitudes, featuring Jim Keltner on drums, guitar ace Danny Kootch, who has played regularly on James Taylor records and concerts, Paul Stallworth (bass and vocals) and pianist David Foster; Henry McCullough, former cohort of Paul McCartney in Wings, who has now formed his own band; and Stairsteps, a group of four black musicians from New York, whose debut album is produced by Bob Margouleff, synthesiser programmer on Stevie Wonder's records.

Harrison is unlikely to veer towards today's fashions in music when seeking to add names to his roster. Unlike his contemporaries who felt they had to "make the scene" with statements about the State of Pop in the embryonic '60s, George was merely a staunch Tamla Motown supporter who later went Indian, and that was just about that.

"I'm still basically in favour of the things I liked in the old days – Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder, those sort of things. No, I've never been interested in Black Sabbath. Heavy metal? Is that what they call it? Oh no.

"In some ways I feel I'm out of touch, particularly with England. In America, there's still more chance of picking up on something fresh, interesting. Maybe because it's a much bigger industry, there's not so much tendency for them to get into little cliques. England does tend to get very cliquey, as far as I can see... To tell you the truth I've still never heard the Bay City Rollers."

"I'm not so keen on the Slades and the Muds. The best one is Peter Skellern"
GEORGE HARRISON

He did add that he would like to hear them, just to form his own opinion – "but I must say that I'm not all that keen on the Slades and the Muds. I think out of the English people I've heard so far the best one – probably he's not so commercial, though – is Peter Skellern. He reminds me of a Harry Nilsson, full of potential. In fact, I just played on one of his new tracks, "Make Love Not War."

Do you ever play Beatles albums, George?
"No, I haven't played one for years."

How do you remember them, when you look back?
"Beatles? Oh, I think The Beatles were, or are [*long pause*]... very good. One of the points everybody should remember about The Beatles is that we did work hard, you know, and we made a point of trying to broaden our experiences on our own, to overcome as many limitations as we could.

"And there were quite a few restrictions in those days, like four-track recordings and all that sort of thing. And we used to play in those huge places with 30-watt amplifiers! I think The Beatles generally were very, very good on reflection. The music was OK and we kept improving. But then, you know, the days were different; the musicians around today have so much more to listen to, they're bound to end up sounding different because they're exposed to so much. Not so much innocence around now, perhaps, for a group trying to come through and make its mark."

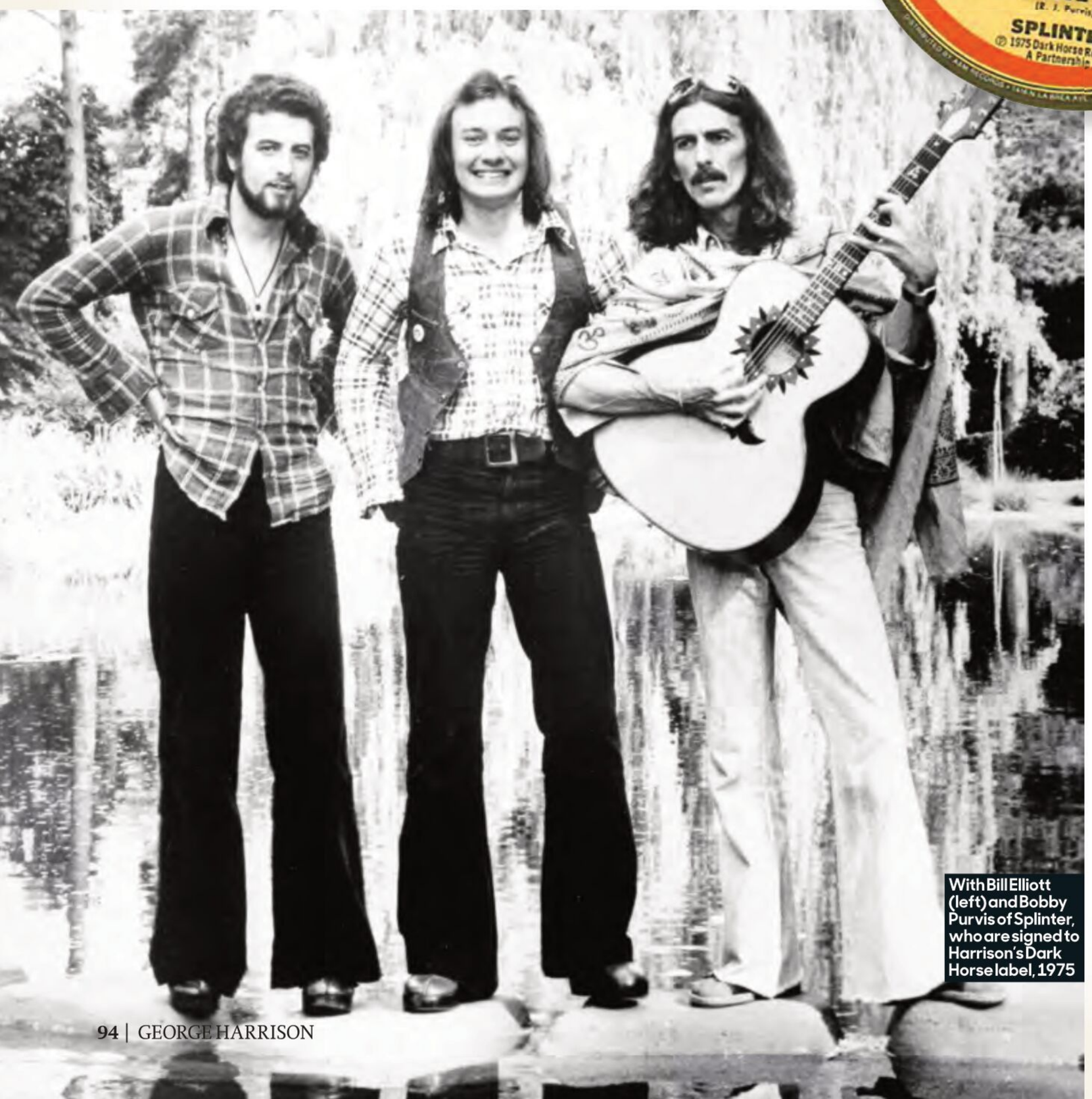
(Sixties musicians talk of groups, '70s musicians refer to bands.)

Individually, though, how do John and Paul and George and Ringo stand up to comparison with The Beatles? His answer was slow and deliberate.
"I suppose to look at each of us individually now, even if we're rated as big solo artists, each one of us may not be as heavy as The Beatles were collectively – but at the same time no less heavy than any heavies who are around. We probably didn't even realise ourselves how heavy we were. I mean it's only now when you sit and watch documentaries about The Beatles that you realise how big it all was. At the time, we were going through it and we were cut off from so much."

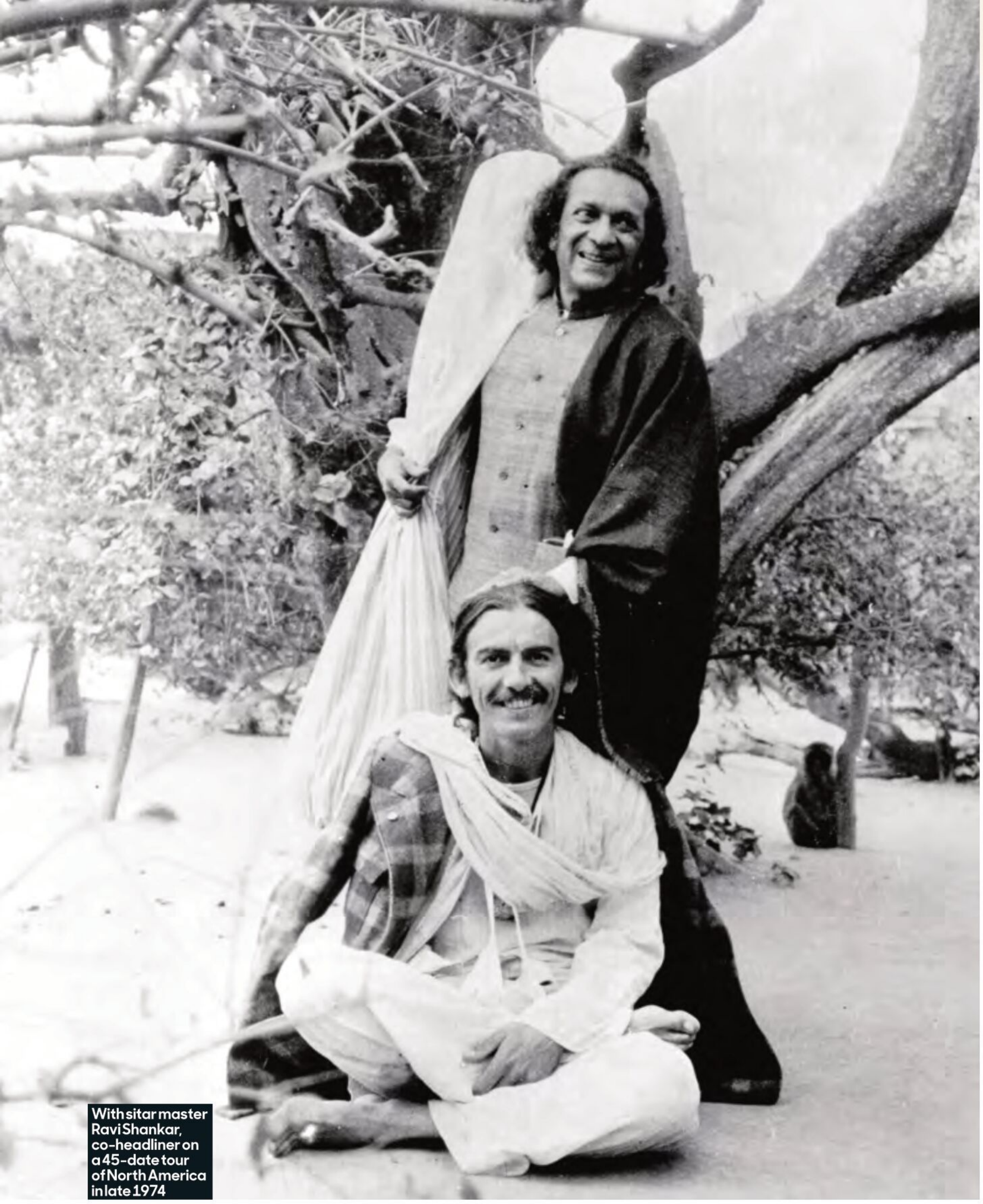
But he stressed that he liked what The Beatles stood for, today, even if at the time he had reservations about the life they led, being buffeted from hotel rooms to concert hall to aeroplane.
"The Beatles did put out great songs, good music, good innovative stuff all the way. We knew our next album would sell a lot just because it said Beatles on the front, but it didn't stop us trying. The albums went up in levels of improvement. Musically, even though I haven't much desire to relive it, it stands up pretty well, I should imagine. The Fab Four Fan Club – great!"

Did he feel competitive towards the other three in that each was trying to prove a solo point?
"No, I don't think so. I'm always pleased when the other three do something good. We were always a little bit attached to each other. We all naturally watch what the others are up to – not very easy, you know, now John's got himself locked into the States."

Did the label "ex-Beatle" hanging round his neck for the rest of his life worry him, as he was the least enthusiastic Beatle and had always sought stature apart from that fame?
"I didn't like it, no. That was the point when we all split up, when we grew older and realised the


With Bill Elliott (left) and Bobby Purvis of Splinter, who are signed to Harrison's Dark Horse label, 1975

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



With sitar master Ravi Shankar, co-headliner on a 45-date tour of North America in late 1974

restrictions from every point of view – as people and as musicians. The only thing I have against being an ex-anything is that it doesn't give much thought to the present. That's all. I mean – I'd rather be an ex-Beatle than an ex-Nazi! But more than anything, I'd rather just be here now. Not so much of the ex."

Was it, then, the teenagers' adulation which finally drove The Beatles apart? For it was certainly George Harrison's pet hate.

"It was nice at first, but the mania seemed to get out of proportion. That wasn't what I was looking for. Some people like that sort of thing. I like to be successful and popular, but there comes a point when it's unhealthy that people think you're something you're not – and the next thing is that these fans get out on a trip and limit what you may be, in their eyes. You know, it's just a concept they create, a concept of what you are, and then they start the bit that says, 'Aw, they're not what they used to be.'

"Well, I used to say this and I say it again now – we might not have been what we used to be. What these fans mean is that we're not what *their* concept thought we were. People put you into a pigeonhole and you've got to fight your way out of it, for their good as well as your own. All I ever wanted from that scene was to remain an individual, and of course being a Beatle placed a severe restriction on individuality in the eyes of those screaming fans."

It came as some surprise, then, when George last year went on the road in America. His concert tour there brought him very mixed receptions and it was as different from Beatlemania as he could have wanted. Not every show was a sell-out; he lost his voice; George being George, he concentrated on songs from his new hard-to-take album rather than the Beatles songs the crowds demand; there were reports of sloppy stagecraft – and the buck stopped firmly with Harrison, whose show it was.

America remains the world capital of Beatlemania to this day, and not even the national hobby of Lennon-baiting can extinguish the love of the all-American Beatlefan. They're the most devoted breed of all, and for George to fall foul on a tour there would be a serious blow to both him and those loyal millions.

What happened then, George? How come your vocals on your new album are so strong and positive, but your voice packed up on that crucial tour?

"It's very simple. Right before the tour I'd been working day and night doing so many things, l ike organising the Ravi Shankar Music Festival at the Albert Hall, and trying to finish my last album, then I flew straight from that to Los Angeles and started rehearsals for the tour – and really, during one period of time, I'd never sang so much. And I just wore my throat out. There simply wasn't enough time and the schedule I'd given myself was too tight to allow for a rest between the album and the Ravi Shankar thing and the tour of the States.

"The only solution was to rest. You can gargle and not speak and all that, but rest was the only answer, and there's no way you can rest in the middle of a seven-week tour.

"But at the same time, I quite liked it. You know, some nights are always easier than other nights, and I suffered on some of them more than others. I might've been the odd one out, but I quite liked my voice – sounded like Louis Armstrong a bit – but anyway, tiredness, that's what caused it. My voice got better towards the end of the tour; it was the start that was weak.

"And anyway, my vocals were only just a small part of what was going on, which was so amazing. Great musicians! So the voice thing – OK, I was upfront, and remember I had to make all the announcements as well and put the show together, which means a load of talking as well as singing, but everybody goes on about me and my voice that wasn't there. That was a minor problem. I was wiped out, tired, and it wasn't there. Never got a chance to sleep properly, so it took a long time to come back.

"Also, in the old days when I used to tour with The Beatles, I never used to sing that much. The whole show we did went for 30 minutes!" (George was talking here of the package shows which placed The Beatles at the top of a bill comprising four or five acts; by the time The Beatles came on stage, the crowd roar was so deafening that it mattered not whether they sang or played a note. It was this non-importance attached to the music which displeased George.)

"Thirty minutes in the old days, and if we were pushed we could get that down to 18 minutes, by going fast, so not one of us sang solidly at all. No chance of voices cracking up on a Beatles tour – it was the fans who risked that.

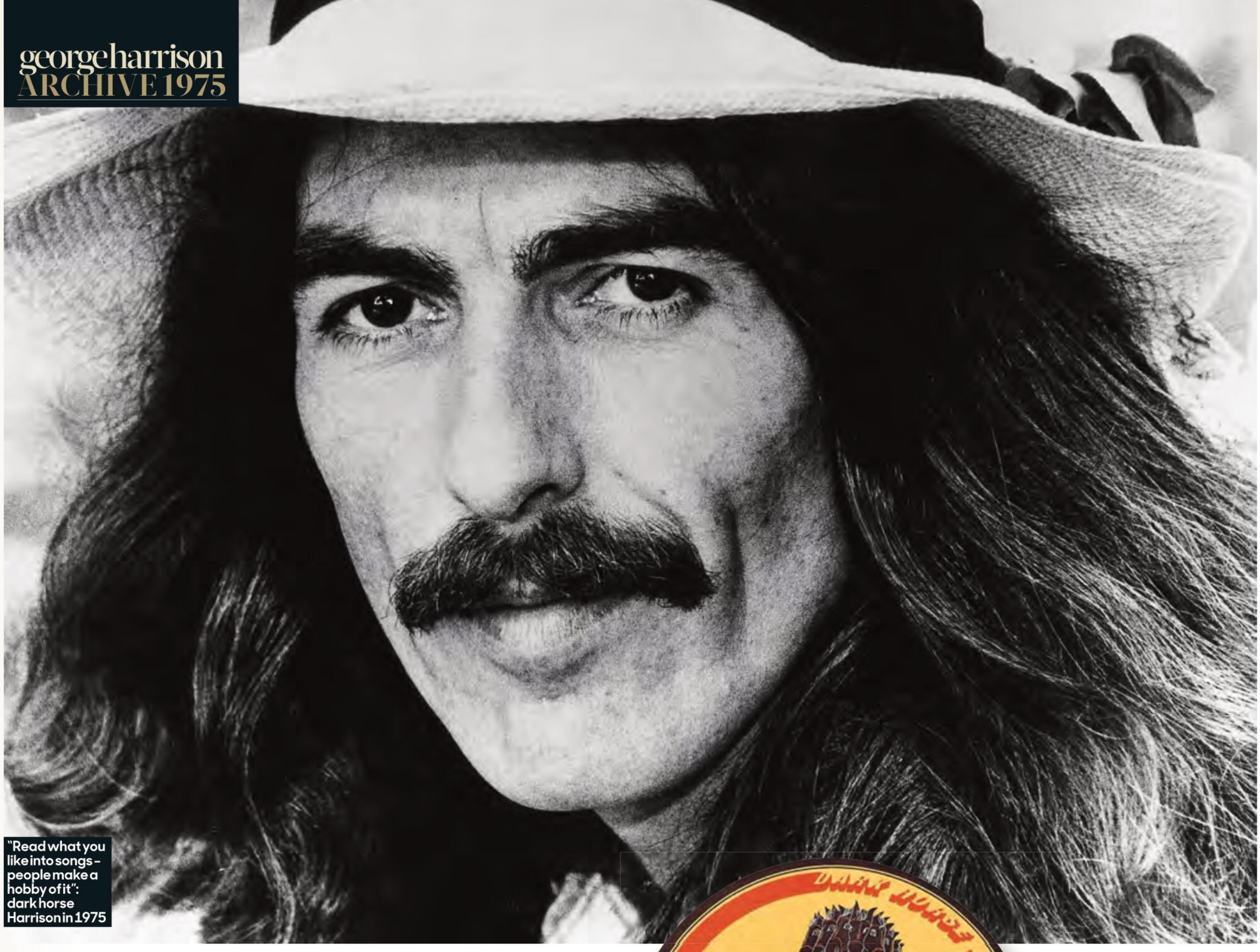
"But you know, on this tour of the States, I did two shows a night for three hours a time, doing lead vocals most of the time apart from Billy Preston's few tunes and the Tom Scott tunes and the Indian section. Then all the talking. I'll know better next time to be fit."

"NEXT time" will probably be next year. George firmly denied rumours that he would tour Britain in the foreseeable future. But he spoke of his plans to revisit Los Angeles when his Dark Horse label gets properly rolling there, and he may tour with some of the artists in his company, particularly ➤

On the sitar...

"I HAVEN'T played the sitar since 1968 or '69, and the funny thing is that I keep winning the *Playboy* polls for playing it. And people put you in a bag and nowadays all I've got to do is the slightest unusual rhythm and they say, 'There he goes, all Indian again.' I never expected to be a master of Indian music. Musicians over there spend their lives at it; it's their lifestyles as well. I'm still trying to master the guitar!"

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES



"Read what you like into songs – people make a hobby of it": dark horse Harrison in 1975

Attitudes and Stairsteps, to do an American "Dark Horse tour".

A British tour was not on the horizon; the environment was wrong and the hassles would be mountainous. Interesting to reflect on the coming Wings tour of Britain: Paul McCartney, always a crowd-pleaser, aims straight at the core, while George's thinking has always been less immediately commercial, more concerned with the finer points of musicianship. The dark horse. Was the song and the label title autobiographical? "*I'm a dark horse, running on a dark race course...*"

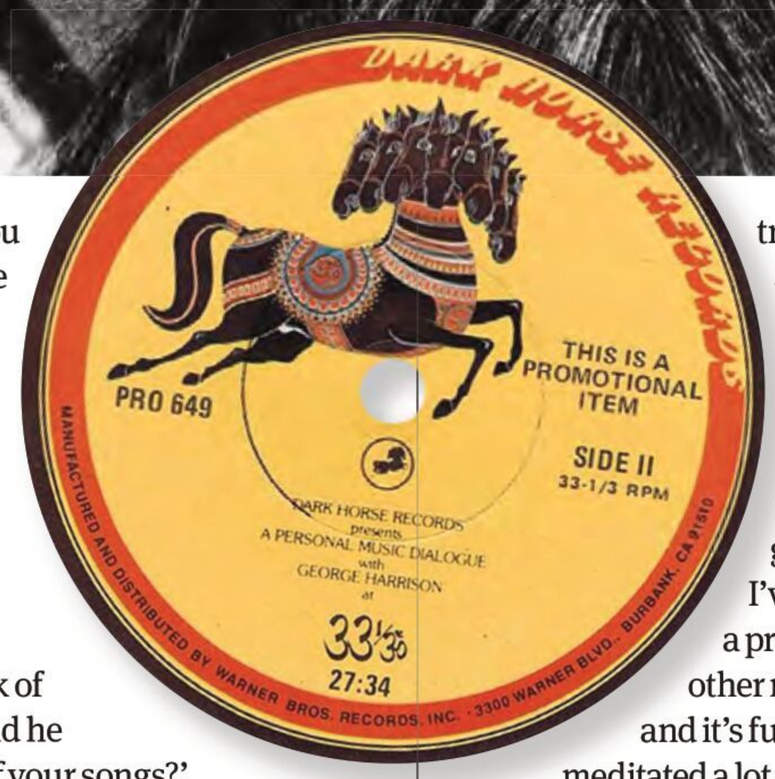
"Yeah, well, the song came to me just early one morning when I was sitting by the fire in Henley and I thought I'd write a song and I just thought of dark horse in relation to Liverpool, which was running through my mind at that moment. When I was a kid there, I always remember them saying, 'You'll never believe that Mrs Jones, she's running around with Mr Badger, you know she's a dark horse.' I thought, 'Hmmm, dark horse. Interesting line for a song.' But you can't say that, it's silly.

"Next day, I woke up and wrote all the lyrics having breakfast at teatime, which is always a good situation for writing a song, I find. Went straight from writing it to the studio and recorded it straight away, although I later re-recorded it to a sort of live version which was the one on the album, but now the lyrics seem to make more sense.

"The best line in the song, which is the most important, is '*running on a dark race course*'.

"So while the first line is very English, and might be taken as an admission to something, the second line means the whole situation is pretty shady. In America, I found out that a dark horse is the one who – particularly in horse racing – they never thought stood a chance, or never took any notice of. Read what you like into songs – people make a hobby of it.

"Then when I started to reassemble my business life, a business manager of mine asked me for a name for my publishing company and I said, 'I can't think of anything, you do it,' and he said, 'How about one of your songs?' So I said, 'OK, Dark Horse.' So then I got carried along with the whole thing, started looking everywhere for horses for the logo. I found the logo on a tin of paint in India. Problem: it was going the wrong way and it was white, but basically the horse itself was good. Brought the tin of paint back, cleaned it up, got an artist to redesign it so it would run round the record going this way. I made it dark." His belt buckle bears the Dark Horse insignia.



It was George who fed the other three Beatles with propaganda about the famous Maharishi and transcendental meditation, a phase most trendy rock musicians went through in 1967. Yes, Harrison still meditated occasionally: "In retrospect, that was probably one of the greatest experiences I've ever had. There was a programme on TV the other night about meditation, and it's funny for me, having meditated a lot and now watching them all, to see the meditators trying to prove scientifically that meditation is of value. They get involved in doing all these experiments and testing people, but I can tell you and them all that that's a waste of time, because it's only through experiencing it can you realise what it does and why it is of such value.

"On the other hand, Maharishi was always put down for propagating what was basically a spiritual thing, but there's so much being propagated that's damaging to life that I'm glad there are good people around like him and others who try to give something which is of practical value to the individual."

"Compared to the average pop star I'm religious, but compared to what I should be, I'm a heathen"

George said he prayed, but as for considering himself heavily religious, "maybe compared to the average pop star I am, but compared to what I should be, I'm a heathen".

Then again, he wouldn't willingly be compared with an average pop star. "I just want to keep on improving as a musician, writing better and better songs, running a good little record label that encourages musicians, and Bob's yer uncle.

"Beatles were an important point in all our lives, but it was Yesterday..." ॐ

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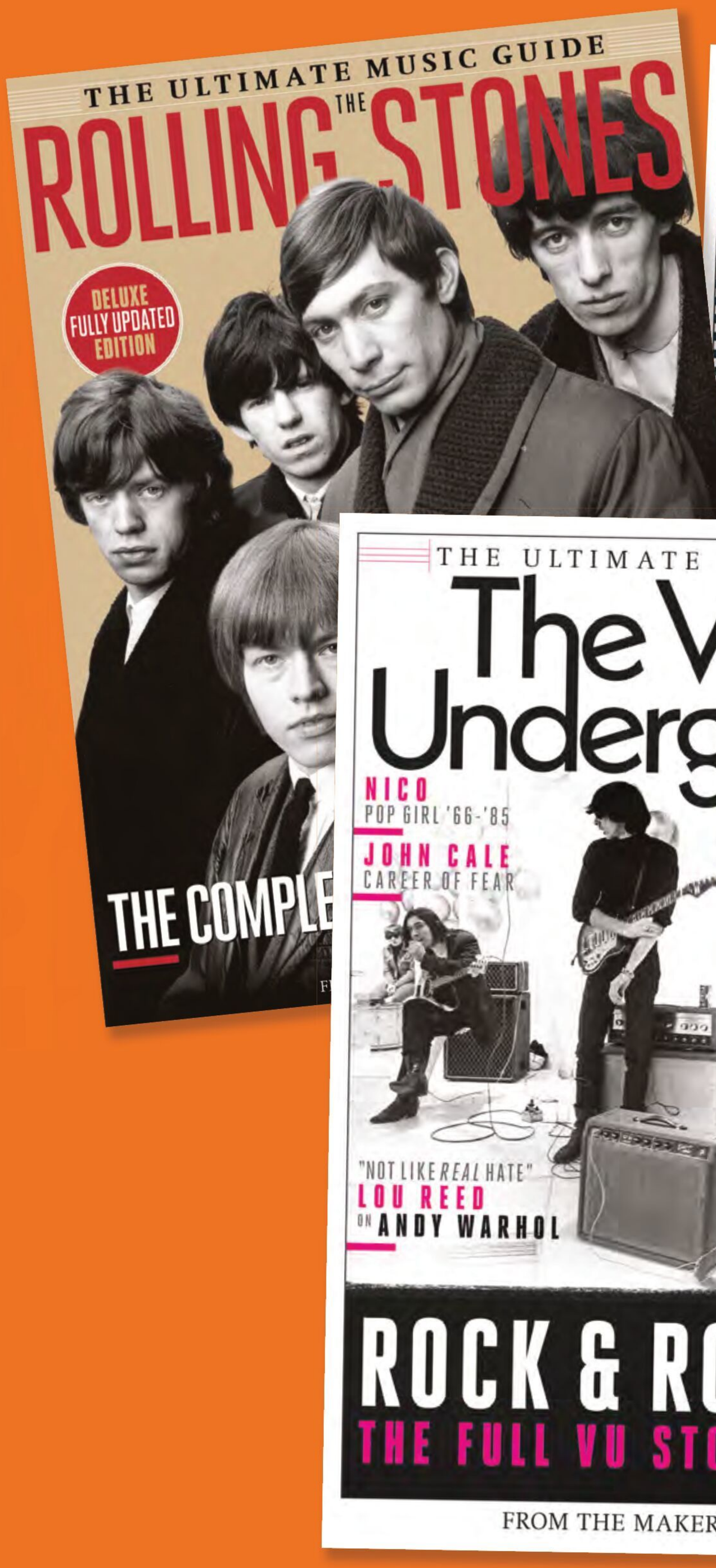

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GEORGE SOLO

THIRTY-THREE & 1/3

RELEASED 19|11|76

Romance, redemption, acrimony, epiphany – George finds new love, and takes back control. BY BUD SCOPPA

AT 33 (hence the title), George had never sounded happier. Falling in love will do that to a fellow: the newly single George had met Olivia Arias on the A&M Records lot in the autumn of 1974, a few months after he'd signed a deal to have his newly formed Dark Horse Records distributed by the Hollywood-based label.

Olivia, a level-headed beauty wise beyond her 26 years, worked in the A&M marketing department, and beyond their mutual attraction, there was an immediate spiritual bond: Olivia had studied meditation with guru Maharaj-ji. George was probably already smitten when he hired her to work in the Dark Horse office on the lot. As they got closer, Olivia could see that George was deep into drugs, cocaine in particular – his intake having increased during his difficult North American tour that autumn – but rather than going along for the ride with her rock-star boyfriend, a common impulse during those drug-fuelled times, she dedicated herself to helping him clean up.

That was the situation when Harrison began work on *Thirty-Three & 1/3* in May of 1976 at his 16-track studio in Friar Park, before a bout of hepatitis brought on by his drug use forced him to delay the recording soon after it had begun. But the illness, which Olivia had him treat holistically, failed to dampen his newly sunny disposition, which was apparent in the material he'd written for the project. Harrison had also earmarked three older songs for *Thirty-Three & 1/3*, and he opened the LP with one of them. He'd started "Woman Don't You Cry For Me" in 1969 while on the road with Delaney & Bonnie and Eric Clapton; it was during that tour that Delaney Bramlett had introduced him to the slide guitar. The track continues Harrison's post-*All Things Must Pass* mode of surrounding himself with top LA session musicians and subsuming his ego under the collegial atmosphere. Here, he's in his comfort zone, weaving tendrils of slide through the syncopated groove locked down by drummer Alvin Taylor, bassist Willie Weeks and the clavinet of David Foster. On the following "Dear One", he slips back into the familiar persona of Astral George, suspended in his own quirky cosmology, a true original reconnecting with his sometimes-fickle muse, the devotional thrust of the lyric deepened by Billy Preston's wistfully liturgical organ.

George had got stuck soon after he'd begun working on "Beautiful Girl" in '69, but the song now had a reason to exist, thanks to Olivia's serene presence in his life. Here, the slide passages seem to embrace the lilting melody in a musical metaphor for his ardour. A few songs later, the slide notes hang like tinsel on an upbeat treatment of Cole Porter's "True Love", as George finds that the simple lyric neatly unites the secular and spiritual worlds. The song sets up a distinctly Harrisonian form of easy listening, which plays out later on the LP in the silky R&B of "Pure Smokey", a tribute to Smokey Robinson, and the closing "Learning How To Love You", a ballad written with Herb Alpert in mind, though Olivia is clearly present in its sentiment.

With its shifting time signature and George's doubled vocal stretching ecstatically to the quavery top of his range, "See Yourself", which he'd started writing amid tabloid coverage of The Beatles' acknowledgment of LSD use in 1967, comes across

CRITICS' VERDICT

"George's singing is the best we've heard it for some time. And to put a few thousand minds at rest – there's not an ounce of Krishna on it, no Indian connotations, no sermons from the Oxfordshire Mount. It's simply Harrison with 10 generally strong songs – and with the flavour back in the *Rubber Soul* vein."
Ray Coleman, MM, November 27, 1976

"If anything, it's his lyrical weaknesses that are most glaring here, since the album is interspersed with passages of quite pleasing guitar work."
Bob Woffinden, MM, November 27, 1976

TRACKMARKS

1. Woman Don't You Cry For Me ★★★★
2. Dear One ★★★★
3. Beautiful Girl ★★★★
4. This Song ★★★
5. See Yourself ★★★
6. It's What You Value ★★★
7. True Love ★★★
8. Pure Smokey ★★★
9. Crackerbox Palace ★★★★
10. Learning How To Love You ★★★

Label: Dark Horse/ Warner Bros
Recorded at: FPSHOT at Friar Park, Henley-on-Thames
Produced by: George Harrison with Tom Scott
Personnel: George Harrison (guitars, vocals, synthesisers, percussion), Alvin Taylor (drums), Willie Weeks (bass), Billy Preston (piano, organ, synthesiser), David Foster (Fender Rhodes, clavinet), Emil Richards (marimba), Gary Wright (keyboards), Richard Tee (piano, organ, Fender Rhodes) Tom Scott (saxophone, flute, Lyricon)
Highest chart position: UK 35; US 11

as a hard-earned revelation. He'd penned the rollicking "This Song" as a way to "exorcise the paranoia" brought on by the ongoing court case over the melodic similarities between "My Sweet Lord" and The Chiffons' "He's So Fine". "It's What You Value", the album's zippiest track, is very much rooted in the material world: George wrote it after drummer Jim Keltner asked for a Mercedes 450SL rather than cash for his work on the '74 tour. He naturally saw the whole thing as a life lesson, which he then embedded into a high-revving arrangement designed for driving the motorway. Likewise, the deliriously whimsical "Crackerbox Palace" connects a chance meeting with the longtime manager of comedian Lord Buckley with his Hindu beliefs ("*I was so young when I was born*") and the opportunities for growth inherent in earthly existence. Olivia captured the album's thematic duality soon after its release, explaining, "When you strive for something higher in the next world, you have a much easier time in this one."

George's devotion to his sweet Lord and to Olivia were ongoing, but for a time he was also beguiled by A&M itself, with its Charlie Chaplin-built campus, a rambling quadrangle of quaint wooden bungalows, its welcoming vibe and its classy top executives, Alpert and Moss. But when he completed *Thirty-Three & ⅓*, later than anticipated as a result of his hepatitis, Harrison didn't present Moss and Alpert with the prize they'd waited two years for – the very basis of their partnership and the reason they'd absorbed a sizeable loss on the eight Dark Horse albums they'd released. They were stunned, and in late September, A&M filed a $10 million lawsuit against Harrison for failing to deliver the album. George – once again mired in litigation just as a New York judge ruled that he'd "unconsciously" plagiarised "He's So Fine" – claimed that A&M had reneged on the terms of the contract.

George had got stuck on "Beautiful Girl" in 1969, but the song now had a reason to exist

"I took [*the A&M deal rather than re-signing with EMI*] because of the relationship we were, supposedly, going to have, which it turned out we never did," he said. "And that was it. I couldn't live with that sort of situation, so I left. We backed the truck up to the office and filled it with our stuff and we went off. But almost overnight, me and Dark Horse Records were transferred from A&M on one side of the Hollywood Hills to Warner Bros Records on the other."

The speed of that move suggests there was more to the matter than a legal dispute; A&M contended that Dark Horse had begun working with the Warner Bros art department in August, before the album was completed. Had Harrison been seduced by Warners and its bright, avuncular leader, Mo Ostin, to the degree that he chose to leave one of the two most artist-friendly American labels for the other? But this relationship would prove to be enduring; Harrison would stay with Warners and remain close friends with Ostin for the remaining 25 years of his life.

With some albums, the backstory is more fascinating than the music, but in this case the songs and performances are inseparable from the swirling circumstances enmeshed in their creation – romance, redemption, acrimony, epiphany. *Thirty-Three & ⅓* stands as a pivotal album in Harrison's body of work, the document of a man in the act of discovering exactly where he belonged.

GEORGE SOLO

GEORGE HARRISON

RELEASED 20|02|79

Happy in Hawaii, romance, humour and well-being contribute to George's eponymous (and most horizontal) collection.

BY PETER WATTS

GEORGE Harrison wasn't in any particularly hurry to maintain the upward trajectory represented by *Thirty-Three & ⅓*, taking a couple of years off before going back into the studio. When he did so, it was to produce one of the most laidback records of his career. "My life is getting better all the time, and I'm happy, and I think that it's reflected in the music," said Harrison as he reviewed his new self-titled album.

Harrison had just become a father, got married and was spending a lot of time in Hawaii, where much of *George Harrison* was written. As a result, *George Harrison* the 'White Album' is the sound of a man at relative ease, with his usual concerns of faith and spirituality replaced by corporeal love songs for his new wife Olivia. Even "Faster", a song inspired by motor racing, is more chilled than an ice-cream factory.

For the best understanding of Harrison's state of mind, take a listen to "Not Guilty", the album's second track. In 1968, The Beatles had spent 102 takes trying to pin this deceptively simple-sounding ditty down for the 'White Album', eventually settling on a version that featured distorted lead guitar and some disorientating reverse echo-chamber, which then didn't make the album's final cut anyway. The aggressive tone of that recording matched the general mood of the 'White Album' sessions, while the pointed lyrics saw Harrison defend his responsibility for the Fabs' trip to India and included a barb about "*upsetting the Apple cart*". The version recorded for *George Harrison* was much more relaxed. This was in keeping with the original demo that The Beatles had recorded in Esher in May 1968, but with more of an old-time jazzy backwash that helped to relocate the events of the lyrics firmly in the past. Time had passed, the song seemed to be saying, things were different now.

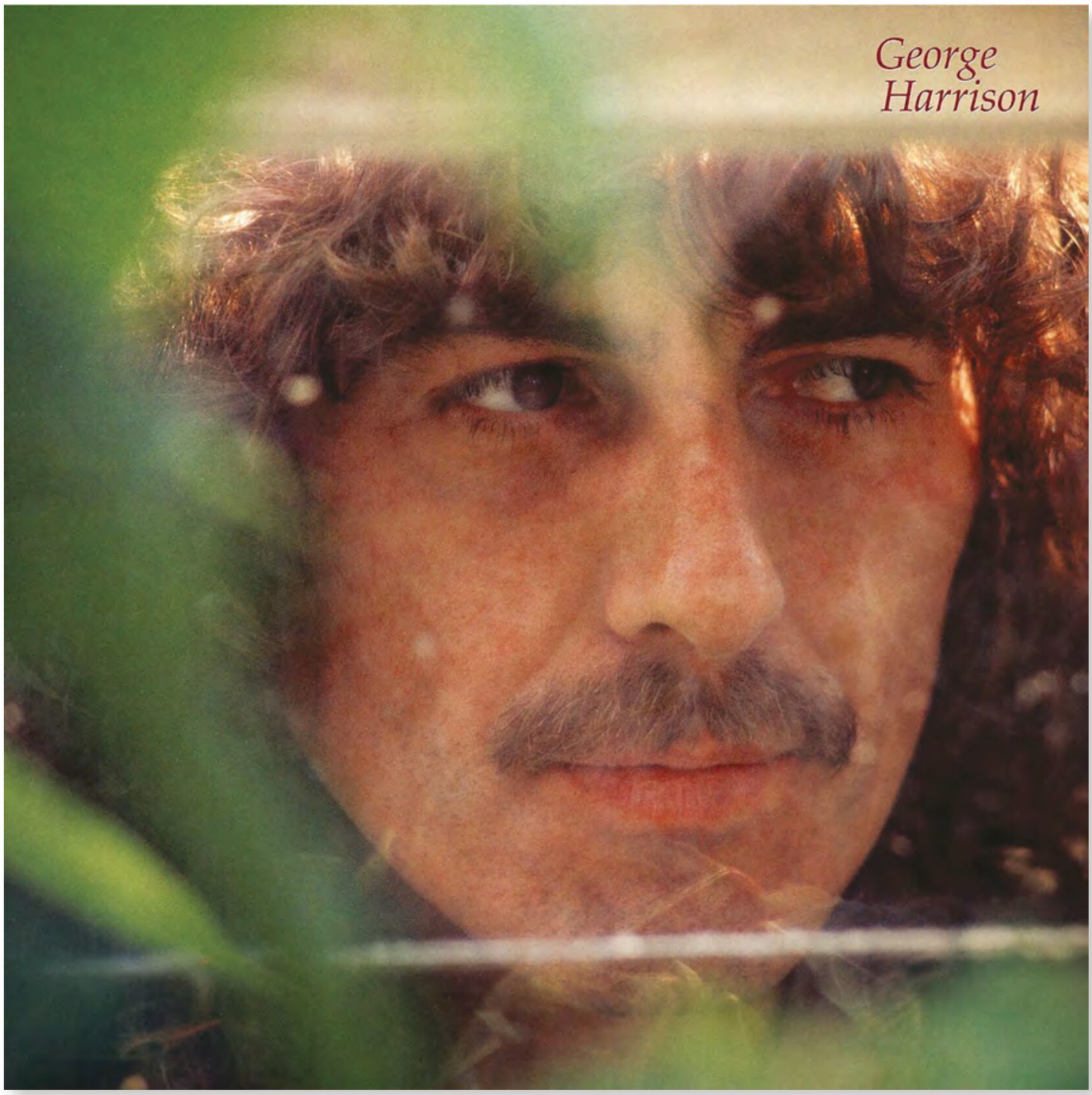
That wasn't the only Beatles reference on the album. Harrison also recorded a song called "Here Comes The Moon" as a belated companion to "Here Comes The Sun". The song has a dash of sitar plus some harmonium from Steve Winwood, but is distinguished by the cascading chorus and the lullaby-like outro. Musically, it has absolutely nothing in common with "Here Comes The Sun", but was recorded by Harrison because he felt the moon in Hawaii deserved a hymn of praise of its own. The album version of "Here Comes The Moon" is pleasant enough, but the gorgeous, sparse demo from the 2004 reissue is also worth a listen.

The psychedelic spirit that infected The Beatles in 1967 could also be located in "Soft-Hearted Hana", which was again written in Hawaii. This was a rare Harrison drug song, with surreal, witty lyrics that reference a recent voyage Harrison took on magic mushrooms. "I hadn't had any psychedelic drugs for almost 10 years, so I thought maybe I should have it to just see if it reminds me of anything," Harrison said in 1987. "I nearly did myself in, I had too many. I fell over and left my body, hit my head on a piece of concrete – but they were great." A ragtime number with a rolling Tin Pan Alley cadence, "Soft-Hearted Hana" opens with a snippet of conversation recorded in the bar of Harrison's

CRITICS' VERDICT

"It's good to note that George seems a lot happier and more at one with the world these days. He took Eric Idle's joshing in *The Rutles* in good heart, and light-heartedness seems to infiltrate the music on this latest album, almost to the point of light-headedness."
'EJ Thribb', MM, February 24, 1979

"Hari's love lyrics are unobjectionable and rarely gauche, while his guitar work, for once in a worthy context, responds accordingly."
Harry George, NME, March 3, 1979



TRACKMARKS

1. Love Comes To Everyone ★★
2. Not Guilty ★★★★
3. Here Comes The Moon ★★★
4. Soft-Hearted Hana ★★★★
5. Blow Away ★★★
6. Faster ★★★
7. Dark Sweet Lady ★★★★
8. Your Love Is Forever ★★★★
9. Soft Touch ★★★
10. If You Believe ★★

Label: Dark Horse
Produced by: George Harrison and Russ Titelman
Recorded at: FPSHOT, Oxfordshire
Personnel: George Harrison (vocals, guitars, dobro, mandolin, sitar, bass), Steve Winwood (synth, harmonium, vocals), Eric Clapton (guitar), Willie Weeks (bass), Andy Newmark (drums), Neil Larsen (Fender Rhodes, Minimoog, piano), Ray Cooper (percussion), Emil Richards (marimba), Gayle Levant (harp), Gary Wright (Oberheim)
Highest chart position: UK 39; US 14

local pub in Surrey. Funny, self-mocking and genially enlightened, the song's playfulness acts as a pointer towards Harrison's forthcoming involvement with HandMade Films.

Harrison's surreal sense of humour was often reserved for music videos like "Ding Dong, Ding Dong" and "Crackerbox Palace" and it was also visible in the video for "Blow Away", *George Harrison*'s lead single, which featured Harrison playing guitar while standing next to a giant red plastic duck, playing percussion on the back of a toy swan and sitting on the back of a nodding dog. The catchy song was inspired by a leaky roof and sold well in America, reaching No 16. On the easy listening chart, it got to No 2, which says a lot about an album that at times can make Wings sound like Led Zeppelin.

The relatively upbeat "Faster", a song inspired by Harrison's love of Formula One, was introduced with the sound of racing cars but then chugs along like a charabanc. Harrison was heavily into his cars at this point and he released it as a charity single to raise funds for two Swedish racing drivers and recorded a video in which he was driven around by Jackie Stewart. The lyric sees Harrison confront the dangers of fame, which is a good conceit but like many songs on the album contains too many clichés to really excite.

The biggest development in Harrison's life at this point was his relationship with Olivia, and this directly inspired four songs. Album opener "Love Comes To Everyone", with a brief shower of guitar from Eric Clapton, is poppy but trite,

George recorded a video for "Faster" in which he was driven around by Jackie Stewart

while the album's second side features a stronger trio of love songs. "Dark Sweet Lady" is a sweet tribute to Olivia, with the use of Spanish guitar to reference Olivia's Mexican heritage. It's followed by "Your Love Is Forever", which is a hidden gem, a beautifully subtle melody and heartfelt vocal that is only let down by a mediocre lyric and a slightly clingy production. Last of the three is "Soft Touch", which is layered with Hawaii-invoking percussion and guitar. It was originally written for *Thirty-Three & ⅓* and is based on the horn part from "Run Of The Mill", but the dressing means it ends up as the most clearly Hawaiian-sounding song on the album. In the lyric, there's a sense of Harrison embracing his role as a man in love, happy to surrender to emotion.

That was previously a role that religion had played in Harrison's songs. On *George Harrison*, any spiritual concerns are left to the final song, "If You Believe", a happy-clappy song co-written with Graham Wright. It has the fullest sound on the album – this is the only tune that sounds like it was recorded standing up rather than sprawled in an easy chair – but the lyrics are again somewhat banal. The message is simple – "*everything you thought is possible, if you believe*" – and if that doesn't work you should pray. The album was well received but sold far better in the US than in the UK.

After the spectacular early successes of his solo career, Harrison was now something of a forgotten Beatle at home, taken for granted by British audiences. It would take the death of John Lennon for that to change. ॐ

HANDMADE TALES

GEORGE ON FILM

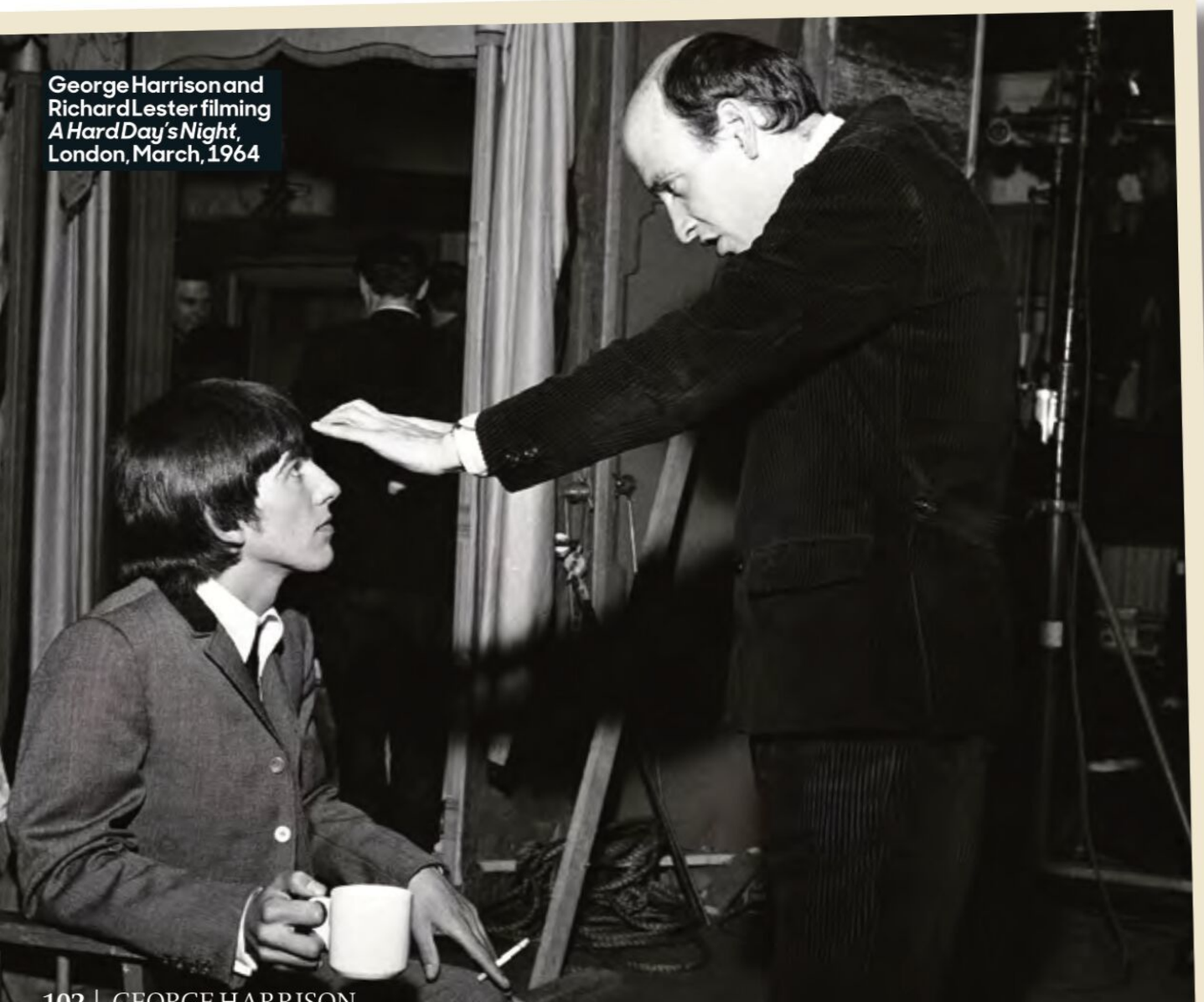
RELEASED 1964-2011

A *Hard Day's Night* to *Withnail*, via the world's most expensive cinema ticket – how George hand-made his own movie empire.

BY TERRY STAUNTON

DESPITE suggestions that The Beatles essentially portray themselves in *A Hard Day's Night*, it could be argued that Harrison is the only member of the band not called upon to act. *Goon Show* fan Lennon seizes the opportunity to exaggerate his inner Peter Sellers, McCartney hams it up with fictional grandfather Wilfrid Brambell, and Ringo's moody meanderings by the Thames have the air of more serious kitchen sink cinema – 'Loneliness Of The Long Distance Drummer', anyone?

George re-mortgaged his house for *Life Of Brian*



George Harrison and Richard Lester filming *A Hard Day's Night*, London, March, 1964

AP/REX SHUTTERSTOCK

George, meanwhile, casually steals a handful of scenes by remaining true to the default deadpan setting of his everyday life ("He's very fussy about his drums, y'know; they loom large in his legend"), and perhaps more tellingly, "You won't interfere with the basic rugged concept of me personality, will you, madam?" Even when they reunite with director Richard Lester for the more outlandish *Help!*, Harrison plays it low-key and ordinary while all around him are mugging frantically.

Yet, although he rarely showed any interest in thespian pursuits beyond his time with the group, he nonetheless made the biggest impression on the film world as a whole, his name gracing the credits of some of the most iconic British movies of the 1980s. Pivotal to his emergence as a big-screen producer and powerbroker was his friendship with Eric Idle of Monty Python, themselves often given the sobriquet "The Beatles of comedy".

But the first overture from the film community came from Joe Massot in 1967, the director approaching Harrison to soundtrack his independent feature *Wonderwall*, premiered at Cannes the following year but given only the briefest of general releases. The incidental pieces and linking cues, mostly one-to-two minutes in length, were written and recorded after Massot had finished shooting his psychedelic tale about an eccentric scientist and his neighbours.

It wasn't until Idle invited him to an advance private screening of *Monty Python And The Holy Grail* that the idea of more hands-on involvement in the industry began to take root. Harrison was intrigued to learn that the film had been made thanks to sizeable contributions to its budget from Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd and Genesis.

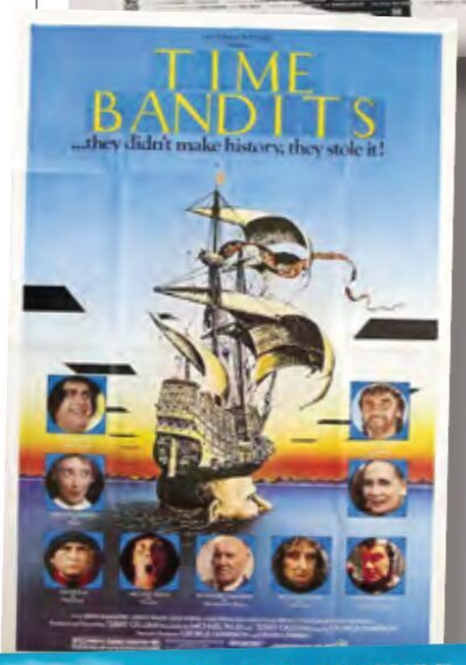
Idle persuaded Harrison to take a small role in his 1978 TV film *The Rutles: All You Need Is Cash*, a feature-length mockumentary of the Beatles-spoofing "Prefab Four" who'd first appeared in the Python's esoteric sketch series *Rutland Weekend Television*, of which George was a huge fan. During filming (the erstwhile

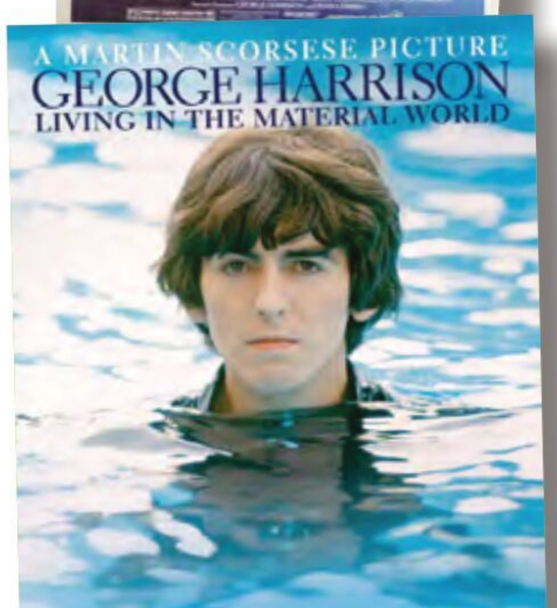
Paul McGann and Richard E Grant in *Withnail & I*, May 1986

Harrison in *Shanghai Surprise*, 1986

At the 39th annual Bafta Awards, 1987

With Eric Idle in *The Rutles...*; (right) a cameo in *Life Of Brian*





Beatle playing a reporter interviewing Michael Palin as an approximation of loquacious press guru Derek Taylor), Idle made passing mention of the Python's next proposed big-screen project, working title 'Jesus Christ: Lust For Glory'.

However, just days before cast and crew headed to Tunisia for location shooting on the film, since renamed *Life Of Brian*, distributors EMI withdrew their funding, reportedly after chief executive Bernard Delfont read the script and decided it was blasphemous. Needing to find somewhere in the ball park of $4 million, the Pythons were stunned when Harrison came forward and remortgaged his palatial Friar Park home to get the production up and running again.

Idle has since said that Harrison found them the cash just because he really wanted to see the film: "It's the most anyone has ever paid for a cinema ticket."

With *Life Of Brian* safely in the can, Harrison and his business partner Denis O'Brien dived head-on into movie-making full-time, forming HandMade Productions, its name apparently inspired by ancient paper underpants George had seen while visiting an exhibition at Somerset tourist attraction Wookey Hole. Contemplating a lengthy hiatus from the music business, Harrison devoted the bulk of his energies to raising finance for film projects, and within a year or so of *...Brian* the company had shepherded *The Long Good Friday* and *Time Bandits* into cinemas.

By the end of the 1980s, HandMade had an impressive 24 features to its name, including *Withnail & I*, *Mona Lisa* and *A Private Function*. Rumours persist that Harrison passed on Paul McCartney's 1984 vanity project *Give My Regards To Broad Street*, but have been vehemently denied by both men, claiming no approach was ever made.

Harrison remained largely unseen while at HandMade, save for brief cameos in *Life Of Brian* (you'll spot him to the right of John Cleese in a clip (above) with other members of the People's Front of Judea; he's the one who looks like he's arrived hotfoot from the photo session for the *All Things Must Pass* sleeve) and *Shanghai Surprise* in 1986. However, he felt compelled to put his head above the parapet during promotion for the latter, the media's hounding of the film's newlywed stars Madonna and Sean Penn familiar to him from his Beatles days.

Sat next to his leading lady at an infamously tetchy press conference in London, Harrison rounded on journalists he thought were intent on slating both the film and Madonna herself. "I can see the attitude written all over your face," he said. "There's no actual point in you asking anything, because you've already predetermined what it is you're going to say. If you want the truth you'll get it, but I don't suppose that some people here are actually capable of recognising it when they see it.

"It was worse [*in The Beatles*] because it was a new experience to me, but now I don't give a damn what you say about me. I know who I am, and you can't get me any more."

HandMade ultimately floundered after a series of box-office flops, and ceased to exist in its original form in 1991, with Harrison suing O'Brien for fraud and negligence. George's last high-profile brush with the film world would come after his death, with Martin Scorsese's affectionate 2011 documentary, *Living In The Material World*.

It contains an interview in which The Quiet One's musician friend and fellow movie mogul Ray Cooper, on the verge of tears, suggests Harrison embraced the film industry to replicate the camaraderie of The Beatles: "He missed working with people."

DAVE HOGAN/GETTY IMAGES, PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, MOVIESTORE COLLECTION LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

GEORGE SOLO

SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND

RELEASED 01|06|81

A Beatle... scorned? Rejected at first attempt, a troubled album is transformed by the tragedy of John Lennon's death

BY JASON ANDERSON

As most people know all too well, a sudden tragedy can have unpredictable effects on the many lives it blights. Plans that seemed set in stone are suddenly meaningless and subject to drastic change. So when Mark David Chapman murdered John Lennon outside the Dakota on December 8, 1980, the event was bound to have profound and unexpected effects, especially on his three former bandmates. Whatever music they released next would inevitably be accorded greater significance than those works might've possessed in a less fraught context.

That's the situation George Harrison faced in June of 1981 when *Somewhere In England* became the first Beatle solo album to be heard by a grieving public. The affecting tribute that Harrison had begun work on a few months previously, "All Those Years Ago", stirred such strong emotions that the rest of his ninth solo album's shortcomings hardly mattered. What could've seemed like a listless exercise by a musician who'd rather be gardening or producing Monty Python movies than making another album (and who had been told as much by his record company bosses) had been transformed by circumstance.

The night after Lennon's death, Harrison and his musicians convened at FPSHOT in Oxfordshire to continue work on the new album, but the mood was dark and unsettled. This was, anyway, not an album noted for its joie de vivre. Begun in the autumn of 1979, work had been completed a year later. But Warner Brothers head Mo Ostin rejected it, asking instead for Harrison to cut four additional tracks in hopes of getting more upbeat, radio-friendly replacements. Ostin also had little fondness for the original black-and-white cover image of Harrison's side profile with a superimposed Great Britain extending from his mane. (In the replacement cover, a photograph shot by Caroline Irwin in the Tate Gallery, Harrison sits in front of a piece by Mark Boyle, a Scottish artist who made his other major contribution to rock history via his pioneering light shows at the UFO Club.)

Harrison hardly concealed his displeasure about getting sent back to the drawing board – "That kind of thing got me a bit pissed off," he later admitted. In case you needed any proof, consider how he chose to begin the revised edition not with "All Those Years Ago" – which, with its Billy Preston-style keyboard intro and three ex-Beatles in the credits, was exactly what radio programmers craved – but "Blood From A Clone", a sarcastic rant that starts with a withering account of his dealings with Warner Brothers and only gets snarkier from there. "*They say they like it but now in the market/ It may not go well as it's too laid back,*" Harrison sings over a reggae-pop groove driven by Herbie Flowers' jaunty, wobbly bassline. "*You need some oomph, papa, nothing like Frank Zappa/ And not new wave, they don't play that crap.*"

Nearly as cynical is Harrison's bid for radio-friendliness in "Teardrops", a mid-tempo shuffle whose thin veneer of pep can't disguise its formulaic nature or its singer's indifference. Another replacement track more reflective of its author's metaphysical inclinations, "That Which I Have Lost" boasts a richer musical setting, even if Harrison's slackness as a songwriter through the era is evident in such patently un-singable lines as, "*He's fighting*

CRITICS' VERDICT

"The songs and the general air of pessimism about 1981 portray Harrison, as ever, as a man with soul who asks those who will listen to look inwards and think warm. Such a public face might well be called corny, but that's what they said in the '60s about flower power, and who could deny that outlook was preferable to today's mood?"
Ray Coleman, MM, June 6, 1981

TRACKMARKS

1. Blood From A Clone ★★
2. Unconsciousness Rules ★★★
3. Life Itself ★★★★★
4. All Those Years Ago ★★★★★
5. Baltimore Oriole ★★★
6. Teardrops ★★
7. That Which I Have Lost ★★★
8. Writing's On The Wall ★★
9. Hong Kong Blues ★★
10. Save The World ★★★

Label: Dark Horse/ Warner Bros
Produced by: George Harrison and Ray Cooper
Recorded at: FPSHOT, Oxfordshire
Personnel: George Harrison (guitars, keyboards, synthesisers, vocals), Ray Cooper (drums, percussion, keyboards, synthesisers), Willie Weeks (bass), Herbie Flowers (bass, tuba), Jim Keltner, Ringo Starr, Dave Mattacks (drums), Neil Larsen, Gary Brooker, Al Kooper (keyboards, synthesisers), Tom Scott (Lyricon, horns), Alla Rakha (tabla), Paul and Linda McCartney (backing vocals)
Highest chart position: UK 13; US 11

the forces of the darkness limitation/Falsehood and mortality which bar him/The way back into the higher world."

Given these results, Ostin may have regretted asking Harrison to take another crack. To be fair to the Warners boss, he had a point about the songs that were excised: "Sat Singing", "Tears Of The World", "Flying Hour" and "Lay His Head". Though not without some lovely performances by Harrison and his group of reliable session men, the songs – three of which first surfaced on the EPs included with the 1988 book *Songs By George Harrison* – are largely interchangeable. As he often does through his Dark Horse years, Harrison can't conceal a certain sense of disengagement, as if he's got his mind set on many other things.

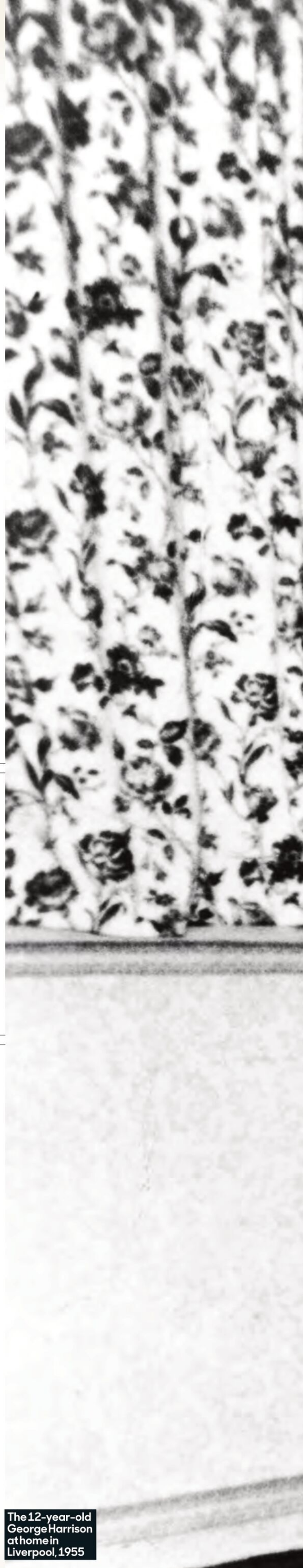
Even the stronger songs that appear on both versions of *Somewhere In England* can feel a little careless. "Unconsciousness Rules" has some of the sourness of "Blood From A Clone" in its acerbic portrait of a disco-era hedonist but is much more fun thanks to its '50s R&B-style bluster. Conversely, "Save The World" risks seeming too earnest as Harrison runs down a checklist of environmental crises (he'd later revisit the song for a Greenpeace benefit album), but it too has sufficient oomph. Eliciting his best guitar performance here, "Life Itself" is a strikingly pretty expression of devotion. A Hoagy Carmichael standard sung by Harrison in a dreamy warble over wafts of sax and piano, "Baltimore Oriole" lands somewhere between the sumptuousness of "Something" and Acker Bilk-worthy schmaltz but works all the same. Alas, his attention seems to wander on the album's other Carmichael cover, "Hong Kong Blues", and the soporific "Writing's On The Wall".

Even the stronger songs that appear on both versions of the LP can feel a little careless

Of course, none of these songs are the reason why *Somewhere In England* was one of Harrison's defining solo successes. He had originally written and recorded "All Those Years Ago" as one of four tracks intended for Ringo Starr's *Stop And Smell The Roses*. Harrison retained his friend's drum track as the foundation for a new set of lyrics that expressed what the world had just lost while also reflecting on his relationship with Lennon, an older-brother figure who he both worshipped and resented. "*Living with good and bad, I always looked up to you,*" Harrison sings in the most poignant line. In his eyes, Lennon was "*the one who had made it so clear*", who had dared imagine a more humane and loving world, and paid the price.

The backing vocals by Paul and Linda McCartney and Denny Laine may be buried in the mix, but it's still the first recording to feature a quorum of three Beatles since "I Me Mine" and the last until the "Threetles" sessions for *Anthology*. It also remains one of the most unusual and oddly contradictory songs in Harrison's career. As a sincere expression of loss and anger that somehow sounds both breezy and elegantly effortless, it stands in stark contrast with McCartney's "Here Today" or Elton John's "Empty Garden", two more nakedly sentimental and lugubrious Lennon tributes that say far less about the mercurial nature of the songs' subject or the thorny relationships he fostered with those around him, like the "love/hate" one he acknowledged with his kid-brother Beatle. Instead, "All Those Years Ago" fired him up at a time when his musical pursuits could rarely do so.

"All I ever wanted to do was play guitar in a band. And this is the result..."



"Up there with Brian Wilson and Debussy". "More Indian than a lot of Indians". "All mantras and oms". Those who knew him best tell DAVID CAVANAGH of the solo-era Georges they knew: spiritual seeker, enthusiastic drug-taker, part-time Python, compulsive gardener. And through the litigation, addiction, charity and charm cuts music that throws its arms around the world.

UNCUT 08|2008

DECEMBER 9, 1980. The police and the media have gathered in a tense vigil outside Friar Park. The terrible news from New York broke several hours ago, and now this neo-Gothic mansion in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, has become a magnet for reporters. It's the home of George Harrison: the Beatle who abhorred the Mania. When, and how, will he react to John Lennon's murder?

A car approaches and is ushered through the gates. Inside is Dave Mattacks, ex-Fairport Convention drummer, who's been booked for a George Harrison recording session. Most Harrison biographies state that he cancels this session, to grieve for Lennon in private. But that is not true. George wants musicians around him today; the session goes ahead.

Mattacks, uncertain what to expect, is struck by the fatalistic atmosphere inside the house and studio. George is pensive, saddened, like a man who's had his worst suspicions confirmed. "It wasn't doom and despondency, it was more like... very sad resignation," Mattacks reflects now. "We got to the end of the day, and we were talking about John, and I'll never forget George's phrase: 'All I ever wanted to do was play guitar in a band. And this is the result...'"

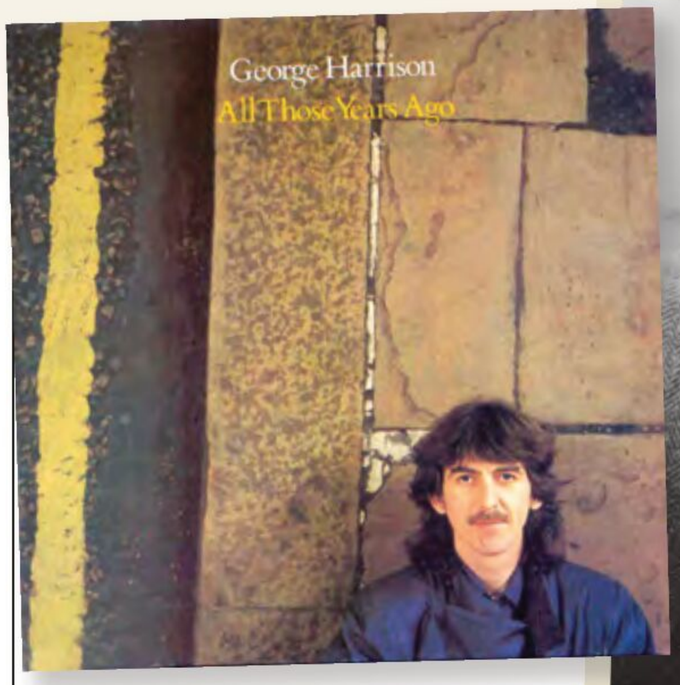
As Lennon is mourned around the table, it's not a time for ironies – but with hindsight, there'll be two. The first is cruel. George was working on a song about Lennon only last night, while he was alive. The two friends recently fell out, so the song is not complimentary. Now that Lennon is dead, the lyrics are scrapped without a word. The second irony is what happens to the song next. With rewritten lyrics, "All Those Years Ago" is released as a single in May 1981. A poignant reunion of the Fabs in body and spirit (it's a tribute from George to John, with Ringo on drums and Paul on backing vocals), the record becomes a worldwide news event and gives Harrison his biggest hit in eight years.

A *Billboard* No 2 chart placing, however,

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

The 12-year-old George Harrison at home in Liverpool, 1955

cannot repair his badly damaged relationship with his record company. In October 1980, astonishingly, Warner Bros had rejected George Harrison's new album, *Somewhere In England*, for having insufficient commercial potential. The composer of "Something", "My Sweet Lord" and "Here Comes The Sun" had been sent back to his studio to try again.



THEY were introduced by Dick Cavett, the American talk show host, as "Gary Wright and Wonder Wheel... and friend". For the next four minutes, Wright, the former Spooky Tooth singer, led his group through a country-rock tune called "Two Faced Man". But the cameramen seemed much more interested in the friend. The mysterious guitarist sat on a stool at the back, with dark curtains of hair and a long beard, his body half-turned away from the viewers. It was November 1971, and this shaggy Billy Connolly lookalike was probably the most significant rock star on the planet. His triple album, *All Things Must Pass*, had been a runaway bestseller, and he'd won international acclaim for his all-star charity concert in aid of cyclone-ravaged Bangladesh. And here at last was George Harrison in person – an anonymous back-up musician.

"There was a part of George that was extremely humble," remarks Gary Wright today. "He liked to work in the background, and not take all the glory for himself. He didn't do music to glorify himself. At the same time, when he was interviewed on that show afterwards, he got right in Dick Cavett's face on a lot of issues. He could be very fiery."

"I remember being on a Chris Evans thing, Thank God It's Friday or something," Paul McCartney tells me on the phone as he drives through London on a warm May afternoon. "Chris said during the interview, 'So what about George? He's a bit of an old hippie, isn't he? All this Hare Krishna...' And it was like, 'You thickhead. No, actually; George is very cool. All that stuff, just because you don't believe it, doesn't mean it isn't cool.' And I'm sure Chris Evans has totally revised his opinion of George, as have a lot of people, because he was effin' brilliant."

A metaphysician and evangelist, with passions as diverse as horticulture, ukuleles and Formula 1 motor-racing. A world-renowned solo artist who shunned publicity and rarely toured. An unabashed didactic whose melancholy minor keys and Serious Views On Life could just as easily give way to silly in-jokes about mates, or a pastoral ode to a sunset. *All Things Must Pass*, if you want to get theoretical, might be termed rock'n'roll's nearest equivalent to the Articles of Faith; by contrast, his self-titled 1979 album is a summery charmer that's happy to lie on the lawn and count the clouds. "George's stuff didn't always grab you the way the other two's did," notes Neil Innes of the Bonzos. "But if you listen to something like 'Beware Of Darkness' – the chords in that – I mean, he's up there with Brian Wilson, he's up there with Debussy. More people should cover his songs."

A Krishna-chanting Yogi with Python-esque tendencies. An anti-materialistic humanitarian with the riches of Croesus (and periodic cocaine problems). "George was a complex man," says Michael Palin. "That's what was so good about him. He had a mind, a brain, a conscience. He was sensitive. A lot of things worried him."

"A wonderfully complicated creature," agrees actor John Hurt. "He had a deeply spiritual side, but was also the enfant terrible. He was seriously avant-garde in his tastes, in his perception, in the way he lived his life. As a person, he's wildly underrated."

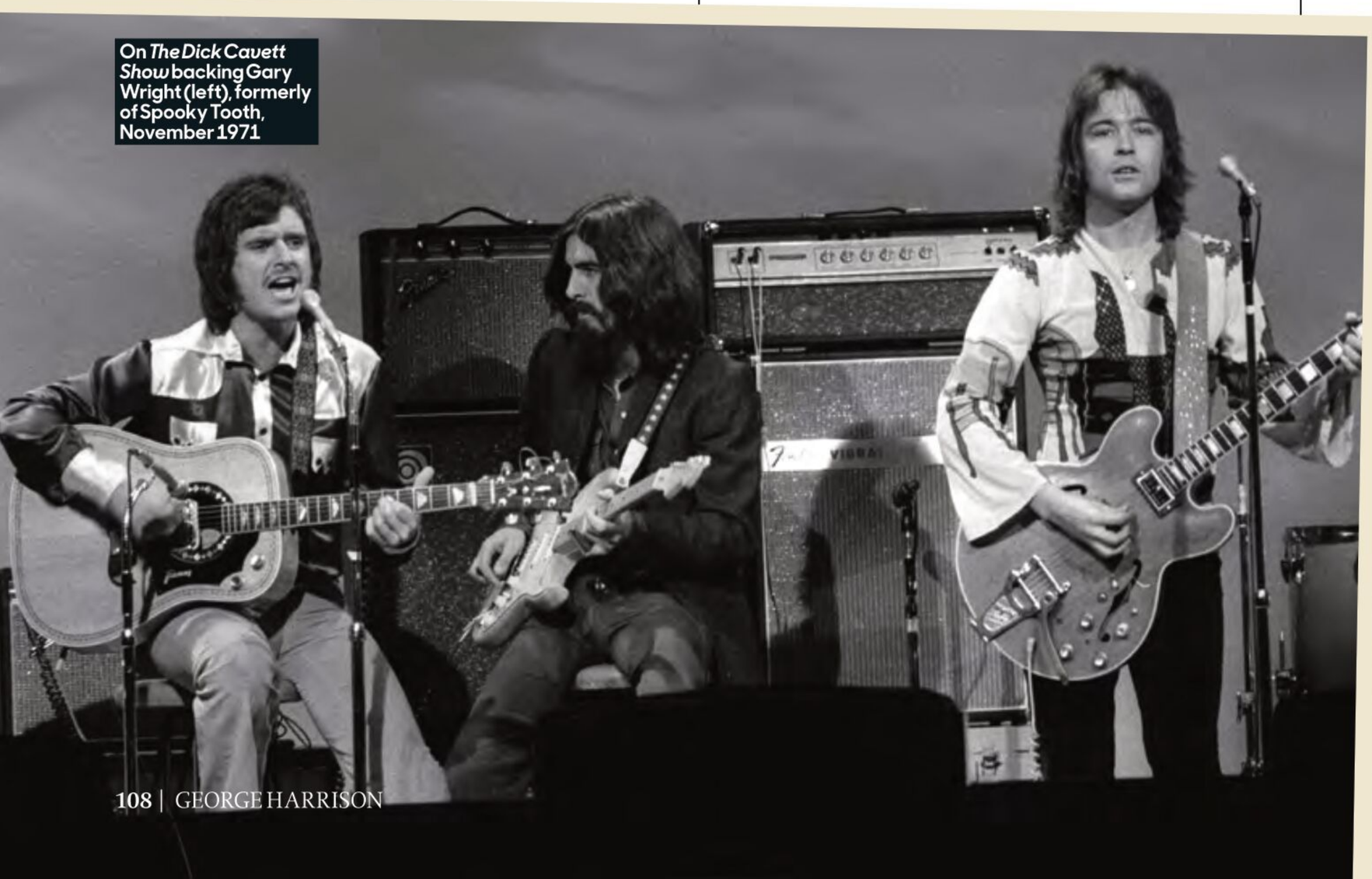
As a musician also. As a maker of solo albums, he's almost written out of history. And yet, examining his post-Beatles career between 1970 and 1980, when he attained grace only to fall from it, and saw his music increasingly criticised and derided, you have to wonder if the people who wildly underrated George Harrison took their cue from George Harrison himself.

Delaney & Bonnie's tour bus rolled up outside the house in Esher on the morning of December 2, 1969. George Harrison climbed aboard with his guitar and amplifier, and found himself back on the road, making his first tour of Britain since The Beatles played the Odeons and Apollos in December '65. In Delaney & Bonnie's sprawling lineup, George was merely an unannounced guitarist in the shadows (precisely how he liked it), but the experience would elate him, helping to take his mind off the slow death of the Fabs.

Always a fan of American music (Motown, The Band, his hero, Dylan), George had become the third notable Englishman, after Traffic's Dave Mason and Eric Clapton, to become a champion of Delaney & Bonnie's Southern gospel-rock revue. "It was a band of gypsies, sort of thing," relates Mason, who played guitar alongside Harrison and Clapton on stage, "and it was just a great fuckin' band." There was no forethought or calculation when George spoke to Delaney Bramlett in London about

"He was seriously avant-garde in his tastes, in his perception..."
JOHN HURT

Drive my car: with a happy Lennon on the day he passed his driving test, February 16, 1965


On *The Dick Cavett Show* backing Gary Wright (left), formerly of Spooky Tooth, November 1971

ABC PHOTO ARCHIVES/ABC VIA GETTY IMAGES, EXPRESS NEWSPAPERS/GETTY IMAGES

Harrison listens to a master tape of *All Things Must Pass*, with Apple promo man Pete Bennett (left) and producer Phil Spector, New York City, October 31, 1970

joining his group; Delaney remembers him simply asking, "You hired Eric, would you hire me?" All the same, no fewer than seven of D&B's band-members and affiliates would play on *All Things Must Pass*, the album George began recording at Abbey Road in May 1970.

The disintegration of The Beatles was far from pleasant for George. A few sources have suggested he was relieved (or even "delighted") by the break-up, since it got the pedantic McCartney out of his hair and enabled George to begin recording the huge stockpile of songs he'd been accumulating since *Help!*; but Pattie Boyd, George's first wife, disputes this. "He was terribly upset during the break-up period," she says. "He was angry and confused. They were all being so hateful towards each other. It was like a bad marriage, at each other's throats."

All Things Must Pass would react to this ongoing turmoil in a number of ways, including sorrow ("Isn't It A Pity"), exasperation ("Wah-Wah") and serene acceptance ("All Things Must Pass"). But other tracks on the album looked far beyond the rancour at Apple. "My Sweet Lord" was an open-hearted address to God, and a new type of Harrison song. "Beware Of Darkness" advised the uninitiated to ward off psychic peril by avoiding negativity in thought and deed. "The Art Of Dying", most far-sightedly, saw the 27-year-old Harrison prepare for death in an ecstasy of resolved, purified karma.

All Things Must Pass was produced by Phil Spector, whose famed symphonic echo Harrison wished to emulate. "George liked the Wall of Sound, and he was enamoured with the legend of Spector," says Gary Wright, who played keyboards on several tracks. "When it came to dealing with Spector the personality, though, it became a bit difficult."

The sessions would stretch into the autumn, to EMI's alarm, and the cast of musicians grew enormously. Klaus Voormann, one of the bassists, recalls "four keyboard players at the same time, all playing the same thing". Other songs were arranged more modestly – at first, anyway. But when Spector, drinking heavily and losing focus, decided to leave the project in George's hands midway through the summer, the latter proceeded to out-Spector Spector by overdubbing extravagantly and ramping up the echo. "It's still a fantastic album," says Voormann, "but he cluttered it. Phil's first takes were perfect. George admitted later that he put much too much stuff on top."

All Things Must Pass is full of everything. From rustic Dylan folk settings to metropolitan blues-rock jams, it even had a song ("Ballad Of Sir Frankie Crisp") about the eccentric Victorian who'd previously owned Friar Park, the 120-room mansion in Henley-on-Thames that George and Pattie had bought in January. The result of all this "everything" was an album that showed classic signs of both under-confidence and super-confidence. George was an elegant guitarist who'd been perfecting a new skill – slide guitar – since the Delaney & Bonnie tour. He played slide not raunchily but melodically, with a sweet, "cooing" sound that would soon become an identifiable trademark. However, he swamped the sessions for *All Things Must Pass* with multiple guitarists, including Clapton, Mason, Peter Frampton and three members of Badfinger, so that nobody could be too sure who played what.

Then again, George was so enamoured of his overall creation that he presented *All Things Must Pass* to EMI, not as a single or a double album, but as a monumental triple, which needed to be packaged in a special box. Voormann: "I was in Tower Records in Los Angeles one time, and they had the piles of album covers by all the bands, like Chicago or something, which maybe would go up as high as your chest. Then you had *All Things Must Pass*, which was going up to the ceiling!" For good measure, George enclosed a 36 x 24in poster of himself inside the box.

Despite its cost (it sold at twice the price of a normal LP), *All Things Must Pass* was a commercial sensation, topping the American charts for seven weeks. It peaked at No 4 in Britain, where a long-running postal strike prevented shops from sending their official weekly record sales to chart compilers. In 2006, five years after Harrison's death, the chart compilers' data was finally amended, giving *All Things Must Pass* an unbroken eight-week stint at No 1 in 1971. ➤

BETTEMAN/GETTY IMAGES

"Look at the people he got together": with Bob Dylan and Leon Russell at The Concert For Bangladesh in New York, August 1, 1971

Among musicians of that era, the rumour was that George's masterpiece had sold more than any Beatles album. The accompanying single, "My Sweet Lord", was the song of the year, an effortless chart-topper across the globe. "He was thrilled by the success," remembers Gary Wright. "He definitely felt power – in a good way."

The only inauspicious omen was a plagiarism charge by the writers of the 1968 Cliff Richard hit, "Congratulations", whose melody George had borrowed for a throwaway number called "It's Johnny's Birthday". But then, in the spring of '71, there began to be talk of another plagiarism claim, this one relating to "My Sweet Lord"...

THE Bhola cyclone that laid waste to the eastern wing of Pakistan in November 1970 was compounded by political upheaval in the region, a famine, a civil war, a cholera epidemic, an establishment of a new state (Bangladesh), a refugee crisis and an unfolding human catastrophe.

Within weeks of being asked to help by Ravi Shankar, his sitar tutor and mentor, George organised the headline-making Concert For Bangladesh (actually two concerts, one in the afternoon, one in the evening) at Madison Square Garden on August 1, 1971. Finding himself in uncharted waters, the neophyte fundraiser succeeded in assembling a peerless cast. Klaus Voormann, bassist in the concert's "house band", remembers George being "on the phone all the time for weeks", just as Bob Geldof would be in 1985 when planning Live Aid. To add some last-minute panic to George's workload, the performers included the painfully stage-shy Bob Dylan and the heroin-addicted Eric Clapton.

"To have a concert for Bangladesh – who was interested in Bangladesh?" asks Michael Palin

"It was the first big disaster rock'n'roll had responded to. George did it right"

PAUL McCARTNEY

rhetorically. "Yes, it was a terrible tragedy, a terrible mess, but pop stars didn't get involved in things like that. George was a real pioneer. Not only did he have the strength of purpose to say, 'I'm going to do what I can for this country in trouble,' but look at the people he got together. Dylan. Clapton. These brilliant musicians."

Some commentators regard The Concert For Bangladesh as the finest thing George Harrison ever did. ("He must be given credit for that," says Paul McCartney. "It was the first big disaster that rock'n'roll had responded to. Typical of George, he did it right.") The role of onstage emcee at Madison Square Garden was not one that George relished ("You can hear it, he's really nervous," laughs Voormann), but he knew it was necessary and didn't complain. If anything, his obvious discomfort made the music all the more touching. Later on, when legal and tax disputes over the subsequent album and film revenues threatened to scupper the Bangladesh Disaster Fund (in his inexperience, he hadn't registered the concert as a charity), George wrote his own seven-figure cheque.

Speaking to *Uncut* last year, Ravi Shankar made the following point: "A lot of people in the pop world had a superficial interest in Indian music and Indian culture during the hippie period. But George wanted to go deep into it. I gave him some books about Indian philosophy and religion and he read them all... He had a deep appreciation of Indian culture and philosophy." In other interviews, Shankar has described George as "more Indian than a lot of Indians".

To his fellow musicians, who liked playing on his records but didn't necessarily share his beliefs, George could appear a curious mixture of religious influences: West and East, Christianity and Hinduism, New Testament and Bhagavad Gita. "He changed religions a whole bunch of times," claims Delaney Bramlett. "He was trying to find God. He told me he wanted to talk to God." But which one? "My Sweet Lord" was ambiguous. "Awaiting On You All" (on *All Things Must Pass*), counselled: "*By chanting the names of the Lord... you'll be free.*" Note George's use of the plural.

George was monotheistic, believing in only one God, but was multi-doctrinal and did not recognise 'conventional' barriers. Religious conflict (eg, in the Middle East) appalled him. Above all, he stressed the value of meditation as a doorway to spiritual enlightenment. "He would quote you phrases from Paramahansa Yogananda," recalls Bob Purvis of the north-east duo Splinter, whom Harrison produced in 1974. "He could come on very heavy at times. He didn't force anything on us. But it was all mantras and oms." Jim Keltner, the American drummer who played on almost all Harrison's solo albums, remembers frequently being offered phone numbers to call if he wanted to embark on a meditative path. (He didn't.)

Gary Wright became George's spiritual disciple in the '70s. "Initially," he says, "George was into the Krishna movement. He knew all the Hare Krishna people and he gave them money to build their temples in the UK. But in the end, he gravitated more towards Paramahansa Yogananda. They were all basically the same; they were just packaged slightly differently. George was a Yogi. He knew the scientific techniques of meditation, and was into the whole philosophy of reincarnation and karma."

Harrison's friend and producer, Ray Cooper, observes: "Remember, the '60s were over. By this point, George stood out very much on his own. People were almost embarrassed by the religious aspect of life, but George was very passionate about it, and wanted to share it."

But here came the tricky bit. *Living In The Material World*, the album he released in 1973 as the follow-up to *All Things Must Pass*, positively beamed with the radiance and divinity that George had searched for in his post-Beatles years. "He was very clean then," says Jim Keltner. "As far as I remember, he wasn't even smoking. He was 'doing the beads', as they say; he always had the beads in his hands. He was healthy, he was

GAB ARCHIVE/REDFERNS

filled out, his hair was long and thick. He was probably at his peak physically."

But 1973 was a year of fuel crises and wage freezes in Britain, and George's exhortations to swap a material life for a spiritual one, coupled with some unfortunate phraseology in the economic climate ("*Now, the Lord helps those that help themselves*"), hit a resounding bum note. The album was rubbished by critics. George had been immensely proud of it.

"He wasn't really aware of how other people lived," Pattie Boyd comments today. "If you think about it, [*The Beatles*] had become famous very young, and been looked after – nannied, if you want – from a young age. They'd lost a certain touch of reality." Was George puzzled, then, by accusations of preaching dogma from his ivory tower? "It was irritating to him, I think, that these people didn't understand what he was saying."

The backlash had begun.

With Ravi Shankar and company at the Royal Festival Hall publicising Britain's first festival of Indian arts, September 17, 1970

IN Copenhagen in '69, Delaney Bramlett was convinced that he and George were writing the song together. "*Hallelujah*," it went, "*Hare Krishna... my sweet Lord*." As the Mississippi-raised Delaney is quick to tell me, "If you're not sincere, He'll know about it. And 'My Sweet Lord' is a true gospel song."

"My Sweet Lord" was first recorded for a Billy Preston album in early 1970, then by George himself a few months later. George was credited as its sole writer; Delaney never made a legal challenge. The song became a global phenomenon, but many people at the time remarked on its similarity to The Chiffons' 1963 hit "He's So Fine". One ex-Beatle certainly did, anyway. Paul McCartney: "But the thing was, because it was Hare Krishna and '*my sweet lord*', it seemed valid. It wasn't like he was keeping it as a boy-girl song. Somehow, the spiritual nature of the lyrics seemed to excuse the fact that it was a 'nick'."

Bright Tunes, the publishers of "He's So Fine", felt differently and filed suit in February 1971 for infringement of copyright. Harrison's then manager, the notorious Allen Klein, approached Bright Tunes with a view to George purchasing their entire catalogue, but the offer was rejected. The matter was going to court. Two decades of litigation, and the most absurd legal black comedy in the annals of rock, had just been green-lighted.

While George waited for the case to be heard (and in the meantime, parted acrimoniously from Klein), his marriage to Pattie Boyd collapsed and she left him for Eric Clapton in 1974. Clapton's infatuation with his friend's wife had been an open secret for years (as "Layla" showed); George, for his part, had been having a reckless affair with Mrs Ringo Starr. Pattie left Friar Park just as four years of restoration work on the house and gardens came to an end.

"The place was a complete mess when George took it over," says his friend "Legs" Larry ➤

Thirty-three and a thirds

ALL KINDS OF EVERYTHING: FROM SPIRITUALITY TO SLICK R&B, THE BEST OF GEORGE HARRISON'S SOLO YEARS...

ALL THINGS MUST PASS

APPLE/EMI, 1970

The definitive Harrison album, easily his best known. While Lennon and McCartney opted in 1970 for Primal Therapy and farmyard bliss, George pondered the Meaning of Life and All That. An audacious triple, it's essentially acoustic guitar music, but the Harrison/Spector production is gigantic. Decent jams on sides five and six, but one to four are where it's at. **UK charts:** 1 **US:** 1

LIVING IN THE MATERIAL WORLD

APPLE/EMI, 1973

The utopian follow-up, where a spiritual sort of serenity reigns. "Give Me Love (Give Me Peace On Earth)", the US No 1 single, encapsulates the deal: simple message of hope, with gorgeous slide guitar (George) and fantastic rhythm section (Voormann, Keltner). The album to play if you want musicianship at its best. Can seem a bit full-on, religion-wise, though. **UK:** 2 **US:** 1

DARK HORSE

APPLE/EMI, 1974

Slagged off badly in '74 ("lazy", "uninspired", etc), but has aged well. Again, musicianship very important: George had excellent taste and hired the top-drawer US sessioneers of the era. Good job, as one or two songs here are somewhat underwritten. But generally it's mature, laidback, West Coast-style rock with earnest (if slightly croaky at times) vocals. A worrying flop with British fans, however. **UK:** – **US:** 4

EXTRA TEXTURE (READ ALL ABOUT IT)

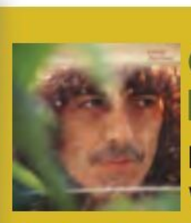
APPLE/EMI, 1975

George now accused of repeating himself ad nauseam, but this is much underrated. Punchy, horn-driven feel on some tracks; others are sublime ballads. "Tired Of Midnight Blue" is this LP's "Beware Of Darkness" – ie, where did he find those chords? Sense of battening down the hatches prevails; like it or hate it. **UK:** 16 **US:** 8

THIRTY-THREE & 1/3

DARK HORSE/ WARNER BROS, 1976

George's music never had much in common with '70s British trends, being more American in style, and this one's a case in point. A slick R&B sound, possibly inspired by the then ubiquitous Philly soul movement, is George's desire; that's R&B in both funky and late-nite-sexy senses. A Smokey Robinson tribute epitomises the idea on Side 2. "This Song", about the plagiarism trial, is awful. **UK:** 35 **US:** 11



GEORGE HARRISON

DARK HORSE/ WARNER BROS, 1979

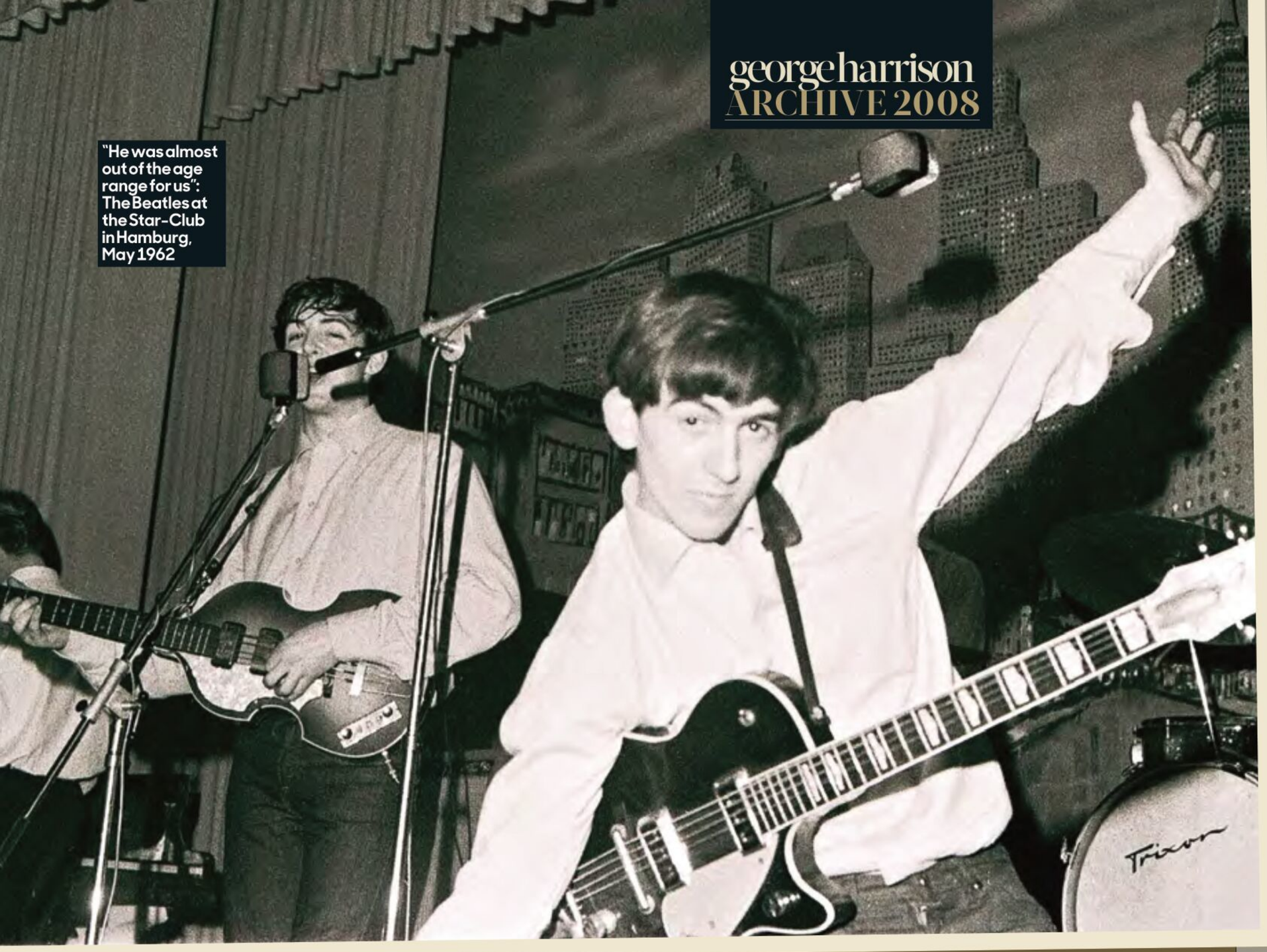
A three-year hiatus ended with this deceptively important long-player. If AOR is not an insult in your book, and you like the concept of George singing love songs to his wife and basically just chilling out, this should be your next purchase. Has a contagious, soft-breeze feel, musically, but George, always one to slip in a mood-breaker, promptly goes and sings a song about motor-racing. **UK:** 39 **US:** 14

SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND

DARK HORSE/ WARNER BROS, 1981

A weird one. George appears to be livid for a change (deteriorating culture, creeping godlessness), but can't quite convince you that he understands the world. He sounds more enthused singing two Hoagy Carmichael songs here than he does delivering faintly jarring lines about "*new wave*". Another departure: he used mostly English session men. **UK:** 13 **US:** 11

IAN SHOWELL/KEYSTONE/GETTY IMAGES



"He was almost out of the age range for us": The Beatles at the Star-Club in Hamburg, May 1962

"I first met George a long time ago, on the school bus..."

PAUL McCARTNEY REMEMBERS GEORGE HARRISON

How did you and George first meet?

McCARTNEY: I first met George a long time ago, on the school bus. We went to the same school, which is now Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts. It used to be Liverpool Institute High School For Boys, and we both went to it. We had the uniform, and the cap folded up and neatly jammed in the pocket. We occasionally would sit next to each other on the bus, and we found we had rock'n'roll in common, and guitars... Eventually, we made a guitar together. It turned out more like a Hawaiian guitar. It was a block of wood with strings on it. We couldn't do any of that hollow-bodied, clever stuff. But when I say we made it, I have to hand it to George, he was more the engineer than me. I stood by and made a few useless suggestions. Those kind of things brought us closer together. We became friends. Eventually, when we were looking for a guitar player, I suggested to John [*Lennon*] that I had this friend who was really good. So George came along one night, on an empty bus, on the top deck, somewhere around Woolton where John lived. And he pulled out his guitar and played "Raunchy", and that was it – he was in the band. He was a bit too young, almost out of the age range for us, a little too baby-faced, but he was just a great player. He stayed with us until he got sent home from Hamburg. The authorities decided he was underage.

His interest in Eastern philosophy is traced to a visit he made to India in '66. Did he come back a different person?

It goes back before that. We had an experience when we were in the Bahamas, filming *Help!*. We were doing a bicycle sequence, just wandering around, [*speaking*] those daft '60s lines: "Oh, I hope you don't mind...", "I certainly don't mind...", "As long as you don't mind..." Kind of witty banter, on the backs of these bikes. And I remember putting our bikes down and – it seemed out of nowhere – this swami guy appeared. He gave us each a book on hatha yoga and was saying what a great thing it was. George became intrigued. And then he visited India, and his love for the country, and the spiritual side of things, really blossomed. He picked up a sitar and started to learn it, and we asked him if he would play it on "Norwegian Wood" – which introduced the sitar to the Western world. He was a little reluctant, because he was a true student by that time and he felt he didn't want to just do some "commercial plonking". He wanted to get it right. But he did it, and it was a triumph.

Do you remember George bringing "Something" and "Here Comes The Sun" to the *Abbey Road* sessions?

Sure. By the time we hit *Abbey Road*, he was writing really classic songs. "*Something in the way she moves...*" – which Frank Sinatra used to call his favourite Lennon-McCartney song. Thank you, Frank. Think you might have missed something. But George totally came through around that period. He matured amazingly as a writer.

Let's be honest. The '70s wasn't a great time for your relationship with him.

What started happening, I think, was that I'd started getting on George's nerves. One prime example was when we were doing "Hey Jude". George started answering my vocals on his guitar: "*Hey Jude... DER-DER-DER-DER... don't make it bad... DER-DER-DER-DER...*" He was filling all the gaps. Now, what do you say? "Er, look, man, do you mind...?" You've got to put it diplomatically. But you've got to say, "I don't want that in the arrangement." And certainly in that case, he took umbrage.

He ended up having a very different solo career to you. He hardly ever toured... he didn't like promotion, or videos or singles...

No serious musician likes all that. But a lot of us think it's a necessary evil and we accept it. But George didn't suffer fools gladly. He'd just think, "No, it's not a necessary evil. It's an unnecessary evil." It would be very George to take that attitude.

Do you think he was uncomfortable performing in front of audiences?

No, but he was a reluctant spokesman. He didn't see that as his role. George was very happy "live" – but as a musician... he took a slightly serious view of it. You know, if someone had to introduce the Royal Command Performance, George would never volunteer for anything like that.

What was it like when you last saw him?

We held hands. It's funny, even at the height of our friendship – as guys – you would never hold hands. It just wasn't a Liverpool thing. But it was lovely. I sat with him for a few hours when he was in treatment just outside New York. He was about 10 days away from his death, as I recall. He was very poorly. But it was lovely, really lovely, and the years just stripped back. We joked about things. One of the things I remember him saying, because he'd been moved from, like, Switzerland to a clinic in New York, and then to a clinic somewhere else – because you do, you sort of follow the treatment – and at one point he said, (*exasperated*) "Can't we just stop in one place?" And I was going, "Yeah! Let's go to Speke Hall!" It's an old Tudor tourist place in Speke, where me and George are from. "We should go to Speke Hall." And he's going, "Oh, that'd be great..." Just amusing, nutty stuff. It was good. It was like we were dreaming. He was my little baby brother, almost, because I'd known him that long.

INTERVIEW: DAVID CAVANAGH

K&K/ULF KRUGER OHG/REDFERNS

Two years after meeting on the set of *A Hard Day's Night*, George, 22, and Pattie Boyd, 21, tie the knot in Epsom, January 21, 1966

Smith. "It had been built by Sir Frank Crisp, a wonderful old eccentric, and then a load of nuns got hold of it. There were little penises on all the cherubs, and the nuns broke them all off. They filled the lake up with rubble, thinking it encouraged swimming and sinful behaviour. The topiary was overgrown, everything was overgrown, and George lovingly restored the whole damn thing. Literally just climbed up a ladder and painted the walls himself."

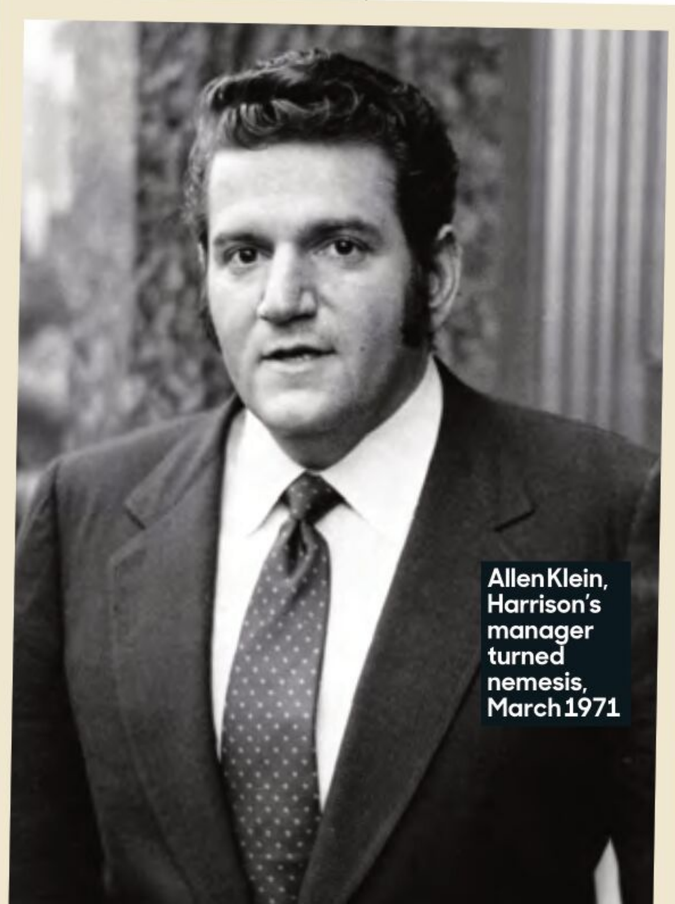
George's love of Friar Park (and gardening) is put forward by many people as the reason he toured only once as a solo artist in the 1970s. "George was very domestic," says Gary Wright. "He had a beautiful home and he loved spending time in his garden, planting things. That was his real love." The duo Splinter, who were signed to George's record label Dark Horse, had spent considerable time at Friar Park in 1974. Bob Purvis: "Fascinating place. It had a miniature Matterhorn in the grounds, and underground tunnels where you could row your boat, with purple lights that showed your dandruff." Splinter were amazed by George's energy in the studio, but noticed him looking increasingly gaunt. Klaus Voormann had heard he was taking a lot of cocaine.

> **"I called and heard him say, 'Klaus is coming. Hide the dope'"**
>
> KLAUS VOORMANN

"It was a bad time for him," Voormann says. "He became unreliable. It started when he was cutting the film for...Bangladesh. I called and said I was coming up, and I heard him say, 'Klaus is coming. Hide the dope.' I appreciated George for his weaknesses as well as his strengths, and I could tell he was embarrassed. I didn't have much contact with him during that period. George, to me, was on a different planet."

George's 1974 North American tour was an ambitious attempt to fuse East and West by placing Ravi Shankar & Friends centre-stage (whether audiences liked it or not) and, in the words of a contemporary Harrison song, ring out the old, ring in the new. The tour was promoted by the famously meticulous Bill Graham. During rehearsals in LA, Harrison's saxophonist and musical director, Tom Scott, got a call from Graham, who had a few concerns. The tour was sold out, but George, wishing to promote his new album (*Dark Horse*), had only incorporated the bare minimum number of Beatles-era songs in the setlist. Graham feared this would prove unpopular with audiences and critics. Tom Scott: "The Beatles' footprint loomed large over the whole thing. George said to me, 'Here's the deal. I am free, finally, of those shackles. I'm not here to give people The Beatles.' The tour poster was a picture of him in Indian garb, standing in a white sari – those robes that go over the head and around. With, needless to say, no Beatles references whatsoever!"

The cocaine-and-partying lifestyle put severe pressure on George's singing voice, which cracked under the strain. Despite proliferating "dark hoarse" puns in the press, the tour continued rather than disappoint ticket-holders. Jim Keltner joined the band as second drummer, but was chiefly there for moral support. "If George had toured all the time, he would've had it down, man," Keltner insists. "He would've known how to pace himself, and could've gone out in stronger shape. He had a great band, he assembled some great musicians, he broke all the rules in a beautiful way – like having Ravi – and he did really well, except that those were ➤



Allen Klein, Harrison's manager turned nemesis, March 1971

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES, JONES/EVENING STANDARD/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

"Drugs were a problem": the poorly received 1974 tour of North America with (l–r) Billy Preston, Willie Weeks, Andy Newmark and Robben Ford in Landover, Maryland, December 13, 1974

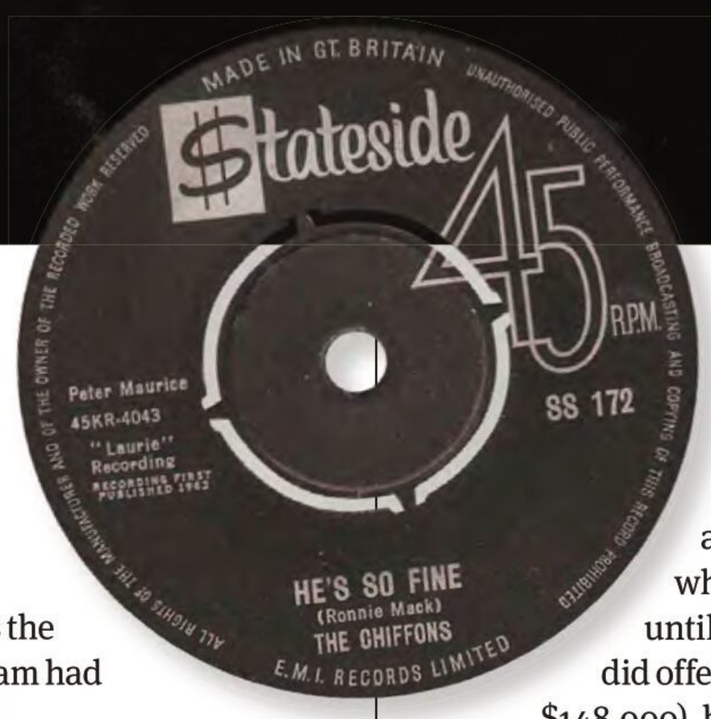
DAVID HUME KENNERLY/GETTY IMAGES

crazy days. Let's be honest. Drugs were a problem."

Reviews were savage. As Tom Scott remembers: "Ben Fong-Torres in *Rolling Stone* hit hard. He slammed the tour. He was the epitome of what Bill Graham had been concerned about."

George responded as he always did – by writing a song – and "This Guitar (Can't Keep From Crying)" was one of the best things about *Extra Texture* (1975). But the prevailing viewpoint now, to his great sadness, was that George had become a complacent bore, whose five-year-old masterpiece, *All Things Must Pass*, like some kind of *Citizen Kane* or *Catch-22*, was something he would never again be able to measure up to.

IN 1975 the partnership of The Beatles was dissolved at a private court hearing in London. Ring out the old. Litigation between The Beatles, Apple and Allen Klein remained outstanding, however. In 1976 the record company A&M sued George for non-delivery of his new album, *Thirty-Three & 1/3* (he'd caught hepatitis and fallen behind schedule), which led to the formal demise of his A&M-distributed label Dark Horse. Things had looked so promising. Ex-Wings guitarist Henry McCullough, who was on Dark Horse's roster, remembers "walking up Sunset Strip in a pair of shorts" during the early optimistic days. "But it was right at the time when 'My Sweet Lord' was in the courts, and that turned Dark Horse upside down for everybody," he adds. "The money went out the window."



Bright Tunes, the publishers of The Chiffons' "He's So Fine", had gone into receivership after filing their plagiarism suit against "My Sweet Lord", which delayed the court case until February 1976. Harrison did offer to settle in January (for $148,000), but was rebuffed. Entirely oblivious to George, Allen Klein, his former manager, was now negotiating behind the scenes to buy Bright Tunes, and the rights to "He's So Fine", and take his former Beatle client to the cleaners.

At the New York trial, after hearing evidence from musicologists, the judge found that "My Sweet Lord" – albeit subconsciously – infringed Bright Tunes' copyright. A second trial, to decide the issue of damages (potentially as much as $2 million), was to follow. But then Klein made his move, buying the copyright and lawsuit from Bright Tunes, and pursuing Harrison through the legal process for the next five years. In 1981, a district judge ruled that Klein had acted improperly and was not entitled to profit. The ruling permitted Harrison to buy the rights to "He's So Fine" from Klein for $587,000 (the amount that Klein had paid for them). But it didn't end there, as both parties contested the finer details of the decision. Further hearings took place in 1991 and 1993 to establish whether Harrison or Klein should own the rights to "He's So Fine" in certain territories.

Poor George. He'd wanted to "talk to God" in a song, and it had caused 22 years of litigation. No wonder Gary Wright tells us: "He hated lawsuits. You would see reams of paper piled up on his desk. He hated anything to do with the business side of the music industry."

To Harrison's credit, his '79 LP, simply entitled *George Harrison*, emerged in the midst of this legal paper-mountain and focused almost exclusively on the positive things in life. He had married for a second time, to Olivia Arias, and they'd had a son, Dhani. The LP had a dreamy, contented outlook.

Away from music, George and his business partner Denis O'Brien launched HandMade Films in 1979, bailing out the production of *Monty Python's Life Of Brian* after the original financiers, EMI, pulled out on reading the screenplay. George, a close friend of Eric Idle, was an aficionado of Python, *Ripping Yarns* and *Rutland Weekend Television*, and even made a cameo appearance (interviewing Michael Þalin) in *The Rutles: All You Need Is Cash*. Neil Þnnes (alias Ron Nasty) Þoints out: "When Allen Ƙlein is suing you in all territories of the world, you have to laugh. Or go mad."

But then came 1980, and another judgment, and another ruling, and this one decreed that George's new album, *Somewhere In England*, did not contain any likely hit singles, and that Warner Bros would not release it in its present form. Asked to remove four songs and write new ones, George reluctantly complied. "George lacked a bit of confidence, strangely enough," notes "Legs" Larry Smith. "He was someone who enjoyed a cuddle now and again.

"I remember on *Extra Texture* he printed up some flyers, and on them was written 'Oh no, not him again'. I mean, if that doesn't indicate a lack of confidence, what does?"

Released in its new form in 1981, *Somewhere In England* began with two of the most scathing songs that Harrison had written since "Taxman". The first, "Blood From A Clone", railed against a music industry he no longer understood – one obsessed with image, marketing and duplicating last week's hit. The second, "Unconsciousness Rules", poured scorn on young clubbers for dancing away their troubles to the machine beat. George, never a fan of disco (or punk, or glam, or heavy metal), was merely showing his age.

He was soon to vanish from view for several years, panic-stricken by the murder of Lennon. Friar Park, which had once left its gates open to visitors (Pattie Boyd recalls arriving home one day and finding a member of the public in her kitchen), was now fortified by alarm systems and 'Keep Out' signs, and surrounded by razor wire. And with good reason. When the attack came, in December 1999, from schizophrenic intruder Michael Abram, the knife wounds nearly ended George's life. In the opinion of some sources I spoke to, the terrifying assault left him powerless to fight the cancer which ultimately did kill him.

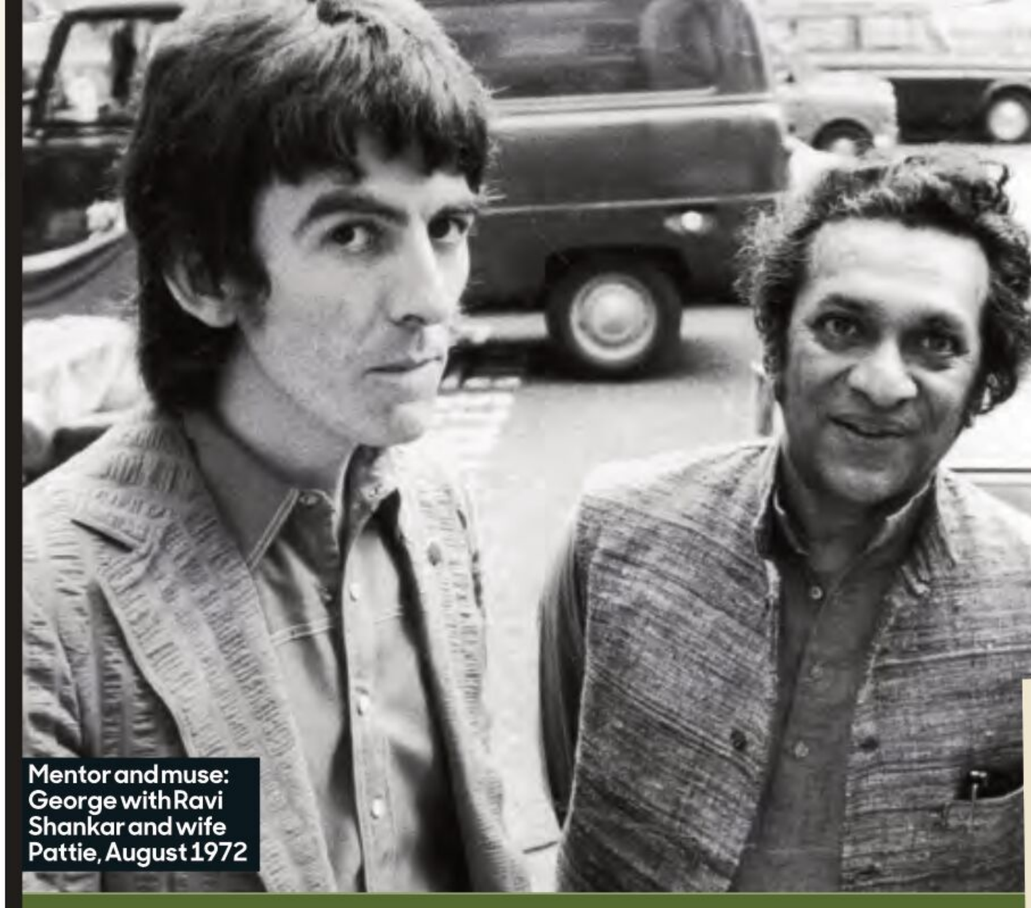
Ray Cooper, his longtime friend, believes that George had been considering a comeback in the 1990s as a solo artist, and perhaps even a tour.

"He hated lawsuits. You would see reams of paper piled up"

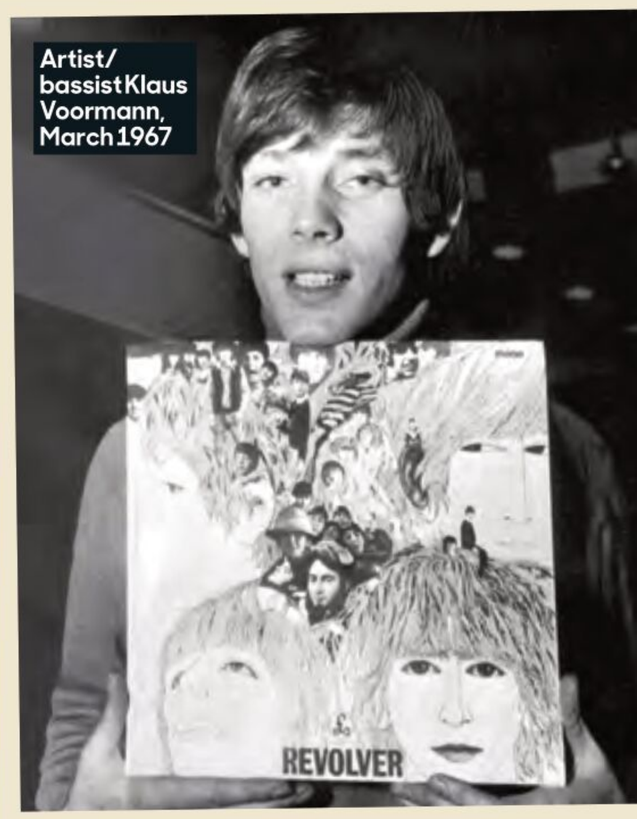
GARY WRIGHT

He'd enjoyed his exploits in The Traveling Wilburys and had written a batch of new songs. Klaus Voormann visited him at Friar Park, where George admitted he was probably not healthy enough to make another album. In November 2001, at the age of 58, he ran out of time.

"He was a wonderfully sane man, considering what had happened in his life," says Neil Innes. "He didn't shrink from life. He confronted it in the best way possible." At Friar Park one afternoon, Innes recalls George running in from the garden, very excited. He asked someone to find him a picture of a moray eel. Puzzled, they looked on the internet, found one, and printed it on a piece of A4. George wrote underneath: "That's a moray." Then, leaving them to work out the pun, he went back to his garden. ॐ



Mentor and muse: George with Ravi Shankar and wife Pattie, August 1972



Artist/ bassist Klaus Voormann, March 1967

Behind that locked door...

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS IN GEORGE HARRISON'S INCREASINGLY PRIVATE LIFE

PAUL McCARTNEY
Bassist. Ex-Beatle. Admired George's work in the '70s, but, "like all bloody marriages", they went through periods of not speaking. Performed "Something" (on ukulele) at 2002 tribute.

PATTIE BOYD
Model. George's first wife. Married in 1966. Left him for Eric Clapton in 1974. Officially divorced in '77. Subject of "Layla", "Wonderful Tonight" and (probably) "Something".

GARY WRIGHT
US songwriter. Ex-Spooky Tooth. Followed George's spiritual lead. "Being a Beatle was a very important lesson for him. Fame, money and power can't give you real happiness."

TOM SCOTT
American jazz musician. Writer of *Starsky & Hutch* theme. Played horns (with his band LA Express) on several Harrison albums, and on his ill-fated 1974 US tour.

RAY COOPER
Rock percussionist, worked with Elton John. Director of HandMade Films. "When you listen to George's music, you catch sight of the man. Wherever he takes you, you trust him."

'LEGS' LARRY SMITH
Surrealist, bon viveur. Drummer and tap-dancer in Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band. George wrote a song about him, "His Name Is Legs (Ladies And Gentlemen)", on *Extra Texture*.

JOHN HURT [1940-2017]
World-renowned actor, and regular visitor to Friar Park. Once saw George and Clapton duelling over Pattie with guitar solos. "He shouldn't have taken Clapton on, actually."

NEIL INNES
Bonzo Dog co-founder, musical brain behind The Rutles. Shared George's interest in metaphysics. "It's too easy to call him a paradox. That implies schizophrenia. It was a harmony."

DELANEY BRAMLETT [1939-2008]
Rock/gospel/blues singer. Leader (with his then wife Bonnie) of influential late-'60s outfit Delaney, Bonnie & Friends, often likened to a "white Ike & Tina Turner".

MICHAEL PALIN
Comedian, broadcaster, travel writer. Frequent guest at Friar Park. "Always an interesting crowd of people up there. He knew all these racing drivers and so on."

KLAUS VOORMANN
First met George in The Beatles' Hamburg days. Created *Revolver*'s cover art. Played bass on several Harrison LPs, often with drummer Jim Keltner.

JIM KELTNER
Much-respected American studio drummer. Became a close friend of George and Olivia Harrison. "I loved George's sense of humour. Very cynical, like John [*Lennon*]."

RAVI SHANKAR [1920-2012]
Sitar virtuoso. India's most famous musician. George's spiritual mentor from 1966 onwards. Recorded for the Dark Horse label and toured with George in 1974.

DAVE MATTACKS
English drummer, aka "DM". Associated with Fairport and Richard Thompson. Played on George's *Somewhere In England* and later worked extensively with Paul McCartney.

BOB PURVIS
One half of Splinter, whose George-produced 45 "Costafine Town" (1974) was Dark Horse's biggest UK hit. "We were a tiny speck of dust in George's life. In our life, he was a giant."

DAVE MASON
Midlands-born songwriter and founder member of Traffic. He became a member of Delaney & Bonnie & Friends. Plays guitar on *All Things Must Pass*.

HENRY McCULLOUGH [1943-2016]
Northern Irish guitarist. Ex-member of Wings (he plays the solo on "My Love"). Released a 1975 solo album, *Mind Your Own Business*, on Dark Horse.

ROY JONES/EVENING STANDARD/GETTY IMAGES, ULLSTEINBILD/ULLSTEINBILD VIA GETTY IMAGES

GEORGE SOLO

GONE TROPPO

RELEASED 27|10|82

Gone Awol, more like. A star cast assembles, but George disappears, we think for good, into semi-retirement. *BY* TERRY STAUNTON

THE success of *Somewhere In England*, no doubt fuelled by the heartfelt Lennon tribute "All Those Years Ago" on which both McCartney and Starr feature, may have served only to remind Harrison that success isn't all it's cracked up to be. Here was, after all, a man who at the cacophonous height of Beatlemania was dubbed "The Quiet One", and whose reluctance to bask in the limelight bordered on the reclusive.

Every album he'd released since 1973's *Living In The Material World* was at least partially recorded at his home studio at Friar Park, Henley-on-Thames, with sessions punctuated by the arguably more pressing tasks of tending to the property's 62 acres of garden, woodland, ponds and ornamental bridges. Seeing his name and face in the world's press again may well have been a contributory factor in his (albeit unspoken) intention to knock this music lark on the head for good.

Consequently, with one album left to fulfil his label Dark Horse's distribution contract with Warner Brothers, he informed the entertainment powerhouse that he would not be available to promote the record, neither through interviews nor videos for its singles. To all intents and purposes, *Gone Troppo* would be his swansong, its title a reference to Australian slang meaning gone crazy from tropical heat.

When Harrison began his solo career in earnest with 1970's *All Things Must Pass* he had deep wells to draw on; numerous songs he'd had in his back pocket that had been denied a berth on Beatles LPs awash with Lennon & McCartney compositions. By the time of *Gone Troppo* it seemed that the well was bordering on dry, inspiration all but deserting him. Prior to recording he had just two numbers waiting in the wings, one dating from Beatles times and the jolly but insubstantial "Dream Away", written for the closing credits of *Time Bandits*, one of the first releases under the banner of his production company HandMade Films.

The passing of time may have unearthed some nostalgic followers for whom the record now occupies a warm place in their hearts, but it remains a candidate for the weakest album in the Harrison catalogue. Opening track and lead single "Wake Up My Love" is a so-so song given even shorter shrift by piercing synthesisers typical of production flavours of the day, while second 45 "I Really Love You", a cover of a minor 1961 hit by doo-wop group The Stereos, barely has the appeal of a drunken outtake. Lest we forget, these were the singles – cherry-picked to help plug an album its maker was too indifferent to plug himself.

Allusions to religion are relatively thin on the ground, and have a tendency to collapse into platitudes rather than profundity. "That's The Way It Goes" may have started out seeking a higher, deeper truth but ultimately shrugs its shoulders and meanders off into a philosophical wilderness, while "Mystical One" is like a musical charm bracelet of unconnected fortune-cookie wisdom. At least

TRACKMARKS

1. Wake Up My Love ★★
2. That's The Way It Goes ★★★
3. I Really Love You ★★
4. Greece ★★
5. Gone Troppo ★★
6. Mystical One ★★★★
7. Unknown Delight ★★★★
8. Baby Don't Run Away ★★★
9. Dream Away ★★
10. Circles ★★★★

Label: Dark Horse
Produced by: George Harrison, Ray Cooper, Phil McDonald
Recorded at: Friar Park, Henley-on-Thames
Personnel: George Harrison (vocals, guitars, synthesiser, bass, mandolin, marimba), Ray Cooper (percussion, electric piano), Mike Moran (keyboards), Billy Preston (keyboards), Herbie Flowers (bass), Willie Weeks (bass), Jim Keltner (drums), Dave Mattacks (drums), Joe Brown (mandolin, vocals), Gary Brooker (synthesiser), Jon Lord (synthesiser), Alan Jones (bass), Neil Larsen (piano)
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 108

the latter is salvaged by a joyous, uplifting melody and a guitar hook that earworms the listener into surrender.

On the instances where Harrison is on good form, *Gone Troppo* polishes a couple of true gems. The seductive sway and minor-chord majesty of "Unknown Delight" suggests a hybrid of George's own "Give Me Love (Give Me Peace On Earth)" and his old mucker John's spectral "#9 Dream", and benefits hugely from Harrison's understated slide playing – in short supply elsewhere on the album.

The album's one acknowledged "oldie", the contemplative closer "Circles", is another welcome spike on the quality control register. Written in India in 1968 during his and the fellow Fabs' stay with Maharashi Mahesh Yogi and first offered for consideration of a place on the 'White Album', its themes of meditation and reincarnation might be lazily pigeonholed as textbook Harrison, but its public bow just two years after Lennon's death affords it additional weight.

It's not always wise to discuss an album's worth "on paper", but a cursory glance at the calibre of players on *Gone Troppo* suggests it could have been a record of greater merit. Long-serving collaborators Billy Preston, Jim Keltner and Ray Cooper are present and accounted for, and Harrison's Friar Park neighbour and Brit rock'n'roll pioneer Joe Brown delicately adorns a few tracks with tasteful mandolin.

There are cameos from such leading lights as Deep Purple's Jon Lord, Procol Harum's Gary Brooker and Fairport Convention's Dave Mattacks, not to mention massed backing vocalists including Bobby King and Syreeta Wright. It all points uncomfortably to the conclusion that the weak link in the chain is Harrison himself, surrounded by major talents thrilled to have been invited to the party but left finding the buffet table wanting.

George had just two numbers waiting in the wings

The album's shortcomings became evident when Warners took it to market, without its global-icon creator's helping hand. Whereas the previous year's *Somewhere In England* made a healthy showing in the Top 20 on both sides of the Atlantic, *Gone Troppo* all but disappeared without trace, failing to chart in the UK and falling short of the US Top 100. If this was to be George's last hurrah it was not with a bang but a whimper. However, three years later...

Although Harrison never formally announced his withdrawal from the music biz, his hero Carl Perkins made reference to his "retirement" when introducing his "good buddy George" on *Blue Suede Shoes: A Rockabilly Session*, a TV special filmed in London in October 1985.

Strapping on a wide-bodied Guild guitar, Harrison is in fine voice for "Everybody's Trying To Be My Baby", the Perkins hit he'd sang on *Beatles For Sale* 21 years earlier, and is later joined by Ringo Starr and Eric Clapton in the band of famous Carl devotees assembled by musical director Dave Edmunds. It was his subsequent friendship with Edmunds that led to a meeting with Jeff Lynne, waiting in the wings to aid George's full-on return to the spotlight. ॐ

GEORGE SOLO

CLOUD NINE

RELEASED 02|11|87

His mind set on the comeback trail, George and Jeff Lynne make a whole lotta spending money out of very modern reminiscence and lighter-than-air melodies. BY MICHAEL HANN

THE movies pulled George Harrison away from music, and then the movies pulled him back. In the early '80s, he had begun to feel like a man out of time, as pop's prevailing winds blew against him. His mounting irritation at the state of the music industry had been evident on "Blood From a Clone", from 1981's *Somewhere In England*. When the following year's *Gone Troppo* failed to elicit anything greater than an apologetic shrug from the listening public, he packed up his guitars and devoted his attention to HandMade Films, the company he had co-founded.

HandMade built a reputation through the '80s with a series of classy films that were a key part of British cinema's early-'80s revival: *The Long Good Friday*, *Time Bandits*, *A Private Function*, *Mona Lisa*. By 1986 it was time for HandMade's attempt to crack Hollywood, with its most costly film yet, *Shanghai Surprise*, starring Madonna and Sean Penn, who were not just hot in their own rights, but newly married. With so much at stake, Harrison put himself in game, recording five new tracks for the soundtrack, a process that whetted his appetite for recording something more substantial.

When *Cloud Nine* was released in 1987, it was a triumph not just for Harrison, but for Jeff Lynne, too. Though Harrison had dismissed ELO in the '70s – "It sounds just like The Beatles" – Lynne's very reverence, combined with his own skill in the studio, was what made *Cloud Nine* work. His musical settings for Harrison were not neutral; they were designed to carry an almost constant subliminal message: "In case you've forgotten, George Harrison was in The Beatles."

The triumph was that he delivered that message without making a record that sounded out of date: *Cloud Nine*'s sound, an easy mix of modern production and old guitars, in which every element is allowed clarity, is the one that young bands today copy when they want to sound '80s without being dated.

Harrison's approach to his first album in five years was governed as much by caution as adventure. "I was afraid to get some producer who would make my album full of gated, reverbed snare drums and DX7s, because I'm sick of that," he told *Mix* at the time (according to engineer Richard Dodd, he had tried three songs with an American producer before summoning Lynne). "I'm just not into that at all. It had to be someone who would take the best of the past and whatever I could do and put it in the now."

The length of time Harrison had been away meant this was going to be treated as a comeback album, so it had to have some semblance of event around it. And so famous friends were gathered – Elton John, Eric Clapton, Ringo Starr (although most of the music was played by Harrison and Lynne themselves, with Jim Keltner and Ray Cooper adding drums and percussion). And one event song was recorded, too: "When We Was Fab", on which Ringo drummed as only Ringo could, and Lynne constructed an arrangement that was so close to its source material that it might as well have been called "I Am the Sea Lion".

CRITICS' VERDICT

"Harrison fans are going to love this album, though it does possess rather a dangerous element of star stacking. Get Elton John, Eric Clapton, Ringo and Jeff Lynne playing together and what you have is not a band but Elton, Eric, etc... all playing battle of the giants. This is the LP's only drawback."
Neil Taylor, NME, November 14, 1987

"It features loads of uselessly weak songs sung in his droning and thin sub-falsetto. [...] It's dross. His friends must tell him."
Carmen Keats, MM, November 14, 1987

TRACKMARKS

1. Cloud 9 ★★★
2. That's What It Takes ★★★
3. Fish On The Sand ★★★★★
4. Just For Today ★★
5. This Is Love ★★★★
6. When We Was Fab ★★★★★
7. Devil's Radio ★★★★
8. Someplace Else ★★★
9. Wreck Of The Hesperus ★★★
10. Breath Away From Heaven ★★
11. Got My Mind Set On You ★★★★★

Label: Dark Horse
Recorded at: FPSHOT, Oxfordshire
Producers: Jeff Lynne, George Harrison
Personnel: George Harrison (lead vocals, electric and acoustic guitars, keyboards, synthesiser, autoharp, sitar, backing vocals), Jeff Lynne (bass, guitars, keys, synth, bk vcls), Eric Clapton (electric guitar), Elton John (electric piano), Gary Wright (piano), Jim Horn (saxophones), Jim Keltner, Ringo Starr (drums), Ray Cooper (drums, percussion), Bobby Kok (cello)
Highest chart position: UK10; US 8

"When We Was Fab" became the album's centrepiece: it wasn't just pastiche, but something – and he was, perhaps, the first ex-Beatle to really manage this – that made it appear as if Harrison had accepted what being a Beatle meant, to both him and to the world. He didn't need to compete in an arms race of modernity, or collaborate with young stars, or capture the zeitgeist. He sounded at ease, as if he were looking back at the past from a great distance, and was amused by what he saw there.

Cloud Nine wasn't a perfect album. The ballads are underworked and obvious: "Just For Today" takes one of the obvious signifiers of late Beatledom – piano chords an octave apart – and takes them nowhere, while Harrison's lyric barely communicates little more than "I'm a bit miserable". "Someplace Else" is no more compelling. It's a peculiarity that Harrison's interviews became enormously greater fun when he was complaining (one he gave to *Creem* to promote *Cloud Nine* went into an uproariously curmudgeonly digression about Dick Clark, concluding: "You get to the point of saying, 'Fuck off, Dick, think of your own ideas, you're not getting any more of our shit. Just make your own films and rip off other people.' Y'know, he's a twat"), but on *Cloud Nine*, the less he seemed to feeling the weight of the world, the better the songs were.

And so where the musical mood is easy – "Fish On The Sand", "This Is Love", and especially the hit cover of James Ray's R&B number "Got My Mind Set On You" – Harrison seems to float. On "Fish On The Sand", the combination of the synthesised bassline with the old-fashioned guitars gives the song a distinctly contemporary throb that's yanked into timelessness. That combination of the organic and the artificial was what Lynne would also bring to the Traveling Wilburys and to Tom Petty's *Full Moon Fever* – you can think of them as a trilogy without very much effort – and which became a defining sound for the older artist wanting to preserve their legacy as well as to reach out to radio. (The link to the past was present on the cover, too, which had Harrison pictured with a Gretsch 6128 Duo Jet he had bought in 1961, his first ever American-made guitar.)

For the first time, perhaps ever, Harrison sounded fun

Cloud Nine emerged in November 1987, and justified all Harrison's comeback hopes. It didn't do any harm, either, that it arrived into a world whose interest in The Beatles had been reignited by both the first CD releases of their albums that year, then by the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Picked up by the following wind, *Cloud Nine* became Harrison's first album to reach the Top 10 in both the US and UK since *Living In The Material World* in 1973.

For the first time, perhaps ever, Harrison sounded fun, and though he never released another solo studio album while he lived, it clearly reinvigorated him into participating in the Wilburys, and playing a series of live shows for the first time in more than a decade, as well as starting on the recordings that eventually became *Brainwashed*. *Cloud Nine* worked for Harrison, and for his fans. And who can ask for more than that?

TRAVELING WILBURYS

TRAVELING WILBURYS VOL 1/ VOL 3

RELEASED 18|10|88 / 29|10|90

The world's greatest supergroup play it for anonymous retro larks, capping George's career revival. BY ANDREW MUELLER

IT is amazing to consider, in retrospect, the tones in which the Traveling Wilburys project was both sold and received. When *The Traveling Wilburys Vol 1* was released in October 1988, it was advertised and understood as a senescent indulgence by an amiable bunch of cardigan-clad shufflers clambering from their rocking chairs for one last stumbling victory lap before submitting to the clammy embrace of the grave. "*Even if you're old and grey,*" pleaded the Wilburys' second single, the tellingly titled "End Of The Line", "*you've still got something to say.*"

The records made by the Traveling Wilburys project therefore endure as – among other things – illustrations of the evolving perception of age as it pertains to rock'n'roll. A few decades down the track, it's sobering to consider that only one of these tottering codgers – Roy Orbison – was past 50, and he only just. Bob Dylan was 47, Jeff Lynne just shy of 41, Tom Petty not yet even 40. George Harrison had turned 45 earlier in the year, a depressing reminder that at the time of the Beatles split, their lead guitarist was 27 years old.

The Traveling Wilburys were, in the first instance, Harrison's idea. He needed a B-side for "This Is Love", a co-write with Jeff Lynne that was slated to be the third single from his 1987 solo album *Cloud Nine*. Harrison had already broached with Lynne the idea of them starting some sort of group – and Harrison, being George Harrison, was never going to be reduced to pinning an ad to the noticeboard at the local tumbledown rehearsal studio reading "Musicians wanted, influences Bob Dylan, Roy Orbison, Tom Petty, no time-wasters". In April 1988, Harrison, Lynne, Dylan, Orbison and Petty convened in Dylan's home studio in Malibu, where Harrison noticed a warning label on box of Ampex two-reel tape: "Handle With Care".

It was swiftly – and correctly – appreciated that the song of the same name deserved better than burial on a B-side. "Handle With Care" was an effortless encapsulation of all the virtues that would prevent the Traveling Wilburys enterprise from becoming, as supergroup collaborations tend to, an infuriating flaunting of aristocratic pomposity. While the song's I'm-still-standing sentiment was not a million miles from Petty's "I Won't Back Down", from the *Full Moon Fever* album he was recording with Lynne at the time, "Handle With Care" was lightened by a winningly judged self-mockery. As a summary of the rock-star life, there was a refreshing honesty to "*Been stuck in airports, terrorised/Sent to meetings, hypnotised/Overexposed, commercialised/Handle me with care.*"

The stellar quintet were persuaded to make an album, and they made a very good one – although it was impossible to avoid noticing a measure of nervous self-consciousness in the presentation of *Traveling Wilburys Vol 1*. Keen to manage expectations of what the sum of these prodigious parts might amount to, forestall accusations of superstar hubris, or both, the album was packaged in a fashion that might have deterred potential listeners who were especially sensitive to laboured zaniness. The five songwriters presented themselves as the Wilbury brothers: Otis (Lynne), Nelson (Harrison), Lefty (Orbison), Lucky (Dylan) and Charlie T Jr (Petty). The sleevenotes outlining the fictional back-story of the troupe were credited to

CRITICS' VERDICT

VOL 1

"This is a highly likeable album, not least because it sounds as though they had a real lark making it. But for a spot of synth and the odd brass overdub, it lives up to Harrison's vision of 'skiffle for the '90s'."

Dave Jennings, MM, November 26, 1988

VOL 3

"Dark glasses, old laurels, tired clichés, rhyming-dictionary rhymes, retarded rhythms, hearty pseudo-Southern lyrics, grainy Old West backdrops, mega-star mega-tedium does not great music make!"

Andy Morgan, NME, November 24, 1990

one Hugh Jampton, EF Norti-Bitz reader in applied jacket, University of Krakatoa (East of Java) (this nonsense was nigh certainly the work of Michael Palin, a friend of Harrison's).

Throughout *Vol 1*, there's a light-headed feeling of reputational burdens being gratefully ditched, of songs being written, a racket being raised, just for the sheer heck of it. Possibly for this reason, the album's only dud note is also its only downward shift of gear: "Congratulations" is a good song poorly treated, slowed to a funereal dirge, when it's easy to hear it working as another slice of the upbeat country rock that characterises such modest crackers as "Rattled", "Heading For The Light" and "Last Night".

The show was stolen, however, by Orbison, on the album's sumptuous centrepiece, "Not Alone Any More". By 1988, Orbison seemed like a spectre beamed from another time, a presence now as otherworldly as his tremulous tenor and brooding baritone had always been. *Traveling Wilburys Vol 1* was the first new work he'd released in nearly a decade, and the first great work he'd released in some while longer (it was not yet widely known that Orbison was also collaborating with Lynne and Petty, among others, on a comeback album, *Mystery Girl*). "Not Alone Any More" is a showstopper, a worthy peer of the most epically lachrymose of Orbison's canon.

Less than two months after the release of *Traveling Wilburys Vol 1*, Orbison died of a heart attack, aged 52; *Mystery Girl* would be a posthumous triumph (Harrison played acoustic guitar on one track, "A Love So Beautiful"). A video for the Wilburys' second single had not yet been shot; in the clip for "End Of The Line", Orbison was remembered with a framed photograph, and a guitar propped in the chair he would have occupied.

Orbison's passing would have been a reasonable enough cue to call time on the Wilburys escapade. It's not altogether fair on the follow-up to suggest that it should have been, but posterity's regard for the Wilburys project would be no different had it never been recorded. *Traveling Wilburys Vol 3* was again somewhat heavy on the wackiness, from the pointlessly confusing title to sleevenotes by one Tiny Hampton – the finger of suspicion points wearily at Eric Idle – to a fresh round of pseudonyms: Spike (Harrison), Muddy (Petty), Clayton (Lynne), Boo (Dylan).

Vol 3 launched with "She's My Baby", a spirited tear-up somewhat smothered by the heavy-metal histrionics of guest guitarist Gary Moore. The closing track, attempted novelty hit "The Wilbury Twist", could possibly have been reflected upon more rigorously. In between lay a couple of bluesy gems, notably Dylan's "If You Belonged To Me" and Petty's "Cool Dry Place", but for the most part "*Vol 3*" was more of the same, but less so.

For the surviving Wilburys, the project formed the tongue-in-cheek centrepiece of an era of mutual rejuvenation. There is an argument that for Dylan especially, the Wilburys venture was the necessary shaking off of cobwebs that enabled his majestic return from the wilderness on 1989's *Oh Mercy*. Harrison, for his part, was already on something of a high: *Cloud Nine* had been commercially and critically pretty well received.

Taken together, the Wilburys and *Cloud Nine* seemed to have proved sufficient return to the limelight for Harrison. The next album to be released under his own name would be the posthumous *Brainwashed*, in 2002.

TRACKMARKS

TRAVELING WILBURYS VOL 1

1. Handle With Care ★★★★
2. Dirty World ★★★
3. Rattled ★★★
4. Last Night ★★★
5. Not Alone Any More ★★★★
6. Congratulations ★★
7. Heading For The Light ★★★
8. Margarita ★★★
9. Tweeter And The Monkey Man ★★★
10. End Of The Line ★★★★

Label: Wilbury
Producer: George Harrison, Jeff Lynne
Recorded: FPSHOT, Oxfordshire; Lucky Studios, Malibu; Dave Stewart Studios, Taluca Lake
Personnel: George Harrison (guitar, vocals), Jeff Lynne (guitar, bass, drums, vocals), Tom Petty (guitar, vocals), Roy Orbison (guitar, vocals), Bob Dylan (guitar, vocals), Jim Keltner (drums), Jim Horn (saxophone), Ray Cooper (percussion), Ian Wallace (tom-toms)
Highest chart position: UK 16, US 3

TRAVELING WILBURYS VOL 3

1. She's My Baby ★★★
2. Inside Out ★★★
3. If You Belonged To Me ★★
4. The Devil's Been Busy ★★★
5. 7 Deadly Sins ★★★
6. Poor House ★★★
7. Where Were You Last Night? ★★★
8. Cool Dry Place ★★★
9. New Blue Moon ★★★
10. You Took My Breath Away ★★★
11. Wilbury Twist ★★

Label: Wilbury
Produced by: George Harrison, Jeff Lynne
Recorded at: Wilbury Mountain Studio, LA; FPSHOT, Oxfordshire
Personnel: George Harrison, Jeff Lynne, Tom Petty, Bob Dylan, Jim Keltner, Jim Horn, Ray Cooper, Gary Moore
Highest chart position: UK 14, US 11

GEORGE SOLO

LIVE IN JAPAN

RELEASED 13|07|92

The scars of '74 finally healed, George is cajoled back into the Far Eastern spotlight, and feels pleasingly warmed. BY JASON ANDERSON

EVERY indication suggests George Harrison actually enjoyed the shows that yielded *Live In Japan*, the double-CD document of his Japanese tour with Eric Clapton in December of 1991. Whether he's trading solos with his friend on "Taxman" or gamely delivering each and every one of the chorus refrains of "Got My Mind Set On You", Harrison's enthusiasm for the endeavour is palpable. That's no small matter given his aversion to getting so close to his sweaty, rowdy, unpredictable and worshipful fans.

Things had also gone rather pear-shaped the last time he faced them in any protracted circumstance. In 1974, he brought Ravi Shankar and their respective groups out on a 45-show tour of North America, the first such jaunt by any member of The Beatles since 1966. Eager to put some distance between present and past, Harrison made his antipathy toward his former band clear both in comments to the press and in the meagre number of Beatles songs performed (he'd further alienate fans by changing lyrics, too). Though negative responses by the media and audiences may have been exaggerated in later accounts that paint the experience as an unmitigated disaster, the experience was indisputably rough on Harrison, who was discouraged by his inability to escape The Beatles' shadow, exhausted by the gruelling schedule and dogged by voice problems.

Over the next 17 years, Harrison grew ever warier of public encounters owing to fears stoked by John Lennon's murder and death threats to Olivia and himself. So how to explain his sudden (if fleeting) reinvention as a road dog? It's a tricky question, one that Harrison typically answered with a favourite quip – "I really needed an excuse to stop smoking."

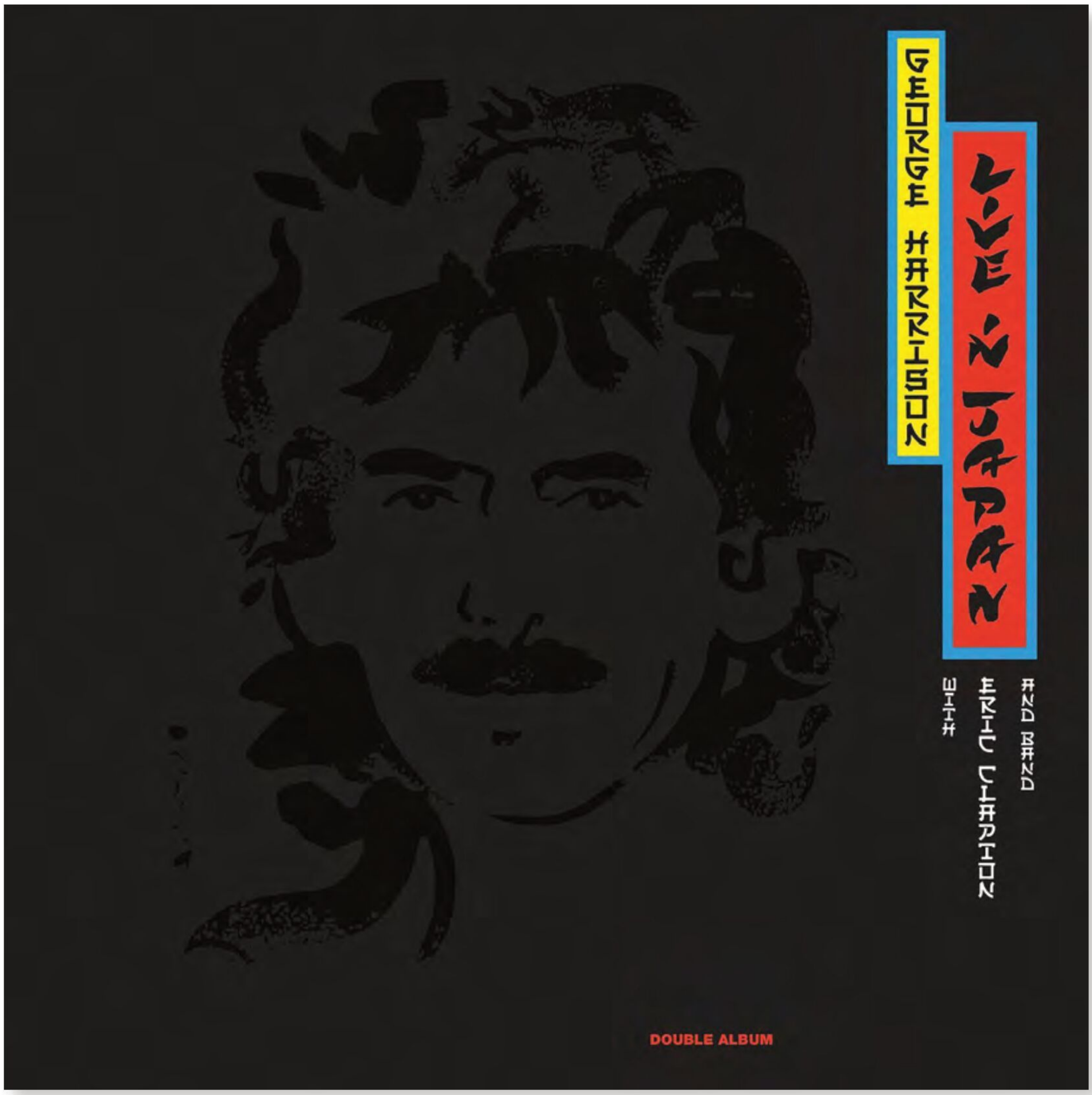
Another reason was the sunnier disposition induced by his time in the Traveling Wilburys. Harrison would joke to Jeff Lynne about using an aircraft carrier to travel between gigs on various tropical island destinations. Though that never came to pass, Harrison was surprisingly open-minded when he spoke to Clapton after a show during his run at Royal Albert Hall in early 1991 and his friend challenged him to get back out there and play. When Harrison told him he couldn't because he didn't have a band, Clapton offered his.

As this casual suggestion blossomed into a reality, Clapton's life took a tragic turn when his four-year-old son Conor died in a horrific fall in March. Throwing himself into work was one way for him to cope with grief and Harrison was happy to keep his friend busy. They chose Japan as the place to give it a go because of the generally reserved crowds and most favourable ratio of concerts played to box office earned. (The estimated take would be $10 million.) Harrison also augmented Clapton's band with two reliable mates: Andy Fairweather Low and Ray Cooper. After three weeks of rehearsal and a joint press conference in Tokyo, Harrison and Clapton launched their one and only tour together at the Yokohama Arena on December 1, 1991.

In all, they'd play 12 shows in six cities. Even that was a lot for a man who was never much for the cheers of a crowd. "After three or four nights of doing the concerts," he said afterwards, "my ego was satisfied." Yet the joy and camaraderie he felt shines through *Live In Japan*, whose 19 songs were culled from the

CRITICS' VERDICT

"1) George Harrison was Macca's mate at school because he knew some chords.
2) More people wanted to shag Ringo.
3) He's *still* a sucker for any tosspot conman wrapped in an orange curtain.
4) He's paid his dues.
5) Aren't old men who used to be in bands really sad?
6) Why don't they just retire or do something else, eh?
7) Doesn't the word 'dignity' mean anything to you, eh?"
Steven Wells, NME, August 1, 1992



TRACKMARKS

1. I Want To Tell You ★★★★
2. Old Brown Shoe ★★★★
3. Taxman ★★★★
4. Give Me Love (Give Me Peace On Earth) ★★★
5. If I Needed Someone ★★★
6. Something ★★★
7. What Is Life ★★★
8. Dark Horse ★★★★
9. Piggies ★★★
10. Got My Mind Set On You ★★★
11. Cloud 9 ★★★
12. Here Comes The Sun ★★★
13. My Sweet Lord ★★★★
14. All Those Years Ago ★★★
15. Cheer Down ★★★
16. Devil's Radio ★★★
17. Isn't It A Pity ★★★
18. While My Guitar Gently Weeps ★★★★★
19. Roll Over Beethoven ★★★

Label: Dark Horse/ Warner Bros
Produced by: Spike and Nelson Wilbury (George Harrison)
Recorded at: Osaka and Tokyo, Japan
Personnel: George Harrison (guitars, vocals), Eric Clapton (guitars, backup vocals), Andy Fairweather Low (guitars, backup vocals), Nathan East (bass, backup vocals), Greg Phillinganes (keyboards, backup vocals), Chuck Leavell (keyboards, backup vocals), Ray Cooper (percussion), Steve Ferrone (drums), Tessa Niles (vocals), Katie Kissoon (vocals)
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 126

stands in Osaka and Tokyo and arranged in the same order as the setlist for most nights (albeit minus the four Clapton-led numbers). Whereas his renditions of Beatles songs have a reluctant air in bootlegs of the 1974 tour, he delivers the eight selections here with great exuberance, beginning with the garrulous take on "I Want To Tell You", chosen as a nod to The Beatles' Japanese tour in 1965. He seems just as delighted by the vamping in "Old Brown Shoe", transformed into a full-blown blues boogie with the help of Clapton and the band's killer keyboard duo of Chuck Leavell and Greg Phillinganes. A ferocious "Taxman" provides another early peak. Even though the energy levels decrease for the solo-era hits, "What Is Love", "Dark Horse" and "My Sweet Lord" all greatly benefit from the tightened arrangements and punchy performances.

Understandably, the more delicate songs fare less well. Though Harrison makes a decent showing on "Something" – he was initially thrown when Clapton and the band insisted he relearn the original solo, not knowing it was one of his most famous – the tour's prevailing ethos of proficiency and efficiency prevents the song from attaining the grace and beauty captured on *The Concert For Bangladesh*, *Live In Japan*'s shaggier and baggier predecessor. The same goes for the slightly overblown and lead-footed versions of "Here Comes The Sun", "Isn't It A Pity" and "All Those Years Ago".

Then again, so much of the approach on *Live In Japan* is built to serve the most pivotal song in the shared history of the two legends on stage. And "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" lives up to those high expectations thanks to the duo's astoundingly deft exchange of solos over the course of three minutes. As one of several Beatles songs here never performed live by the band, it is something rare: an iconic song that still retains a freshness to the men who played it.

Harrison augmented Clapton's band with two reliable mates: Andy Fair-weather Low and Ray Cooper

Moreover, the performance here feels like the apotheosis of a friendship and musical collaboration that was nothing if not complicated – indeed, Clapton's ex-girlfriend and Conor's mother Lory Del Santo later claimed to have an affair with Harrison during the tour – yet consistently pushed both men to greater heights.

Sadly, neither this reconnection with Clapton nor the success of the Japan tour inspired Harrison to repeat it on the other side of the world. "I think I'll possibly do another few shows here and there over the next year or two," he said at the end of the tour. "We'll just have to see what happens."

What happened was not much at all. The following year he performed his final full-length concert, a benefit for the Natural Law Party at Royal Albert Hall. He'd play live only a few times more at special occasions like Bob Dylan's 30th anniversary and Carl Perkins' funeral. But while his Far East excursion failed to relieve him of his reservations about being under spotlights, the warmth and energy of *Live In Japan* suggests he enjoyed it up there more than he could ever admit.

GEORGE SOLO

BRAINWASHED

RELEASED 18|11|02

Death saddles up its dark horse, and George bequeaths a posthumous campfire elegy of trauma and transcendence

BY GRAEME THOMSON

IN death, as in life, George Harrison veered between ecstatic contemplation of eternal life and peevish immersion in the sour milk sea of everyday existence. Released posthumously, his final statement proved an archetypal mix of the spiky and the spiritual, a brave and characteristically honest document that affirmed lifelong passions while refusing to shirk the hard questions.

It had been a long time coming. Too long, ultimately. Since his return to the front line in 1987 with *Cloud Nine*, Harrison had been a Traveling Wilbury, toured Japan with Eric Clapton and endured, if not entirely enjoyed, *The Beatles Anthology* project. Through it all he continued working on his own music, without any great urgency. The sessions for *Brainwashed* stretched back to *All Things Must Pass*, where the seeds of "Rocking Chair In Hawaii" were sown. The breezy "Any Road" had been written in 1988, and "Run So Far" was first recorded by Eric Clapton on *Journeyman* in 1989, with Harrison playing guitar. His charming take on Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler's "Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea", made famous by Cab Calloway, was lifted from Jools Holland's 1992 film *Mr Roadrunner*.

Other songs were demoed at Friar Park, or wherever Harrison happened to be: Japan, Australia, Hawaii, chasing sun, solitude or the Grand Prix. Often he would record with his son, Dhani, already an accomplished musician and producer. When it came to pulling it all together, however, the fates conspired against him. Harrison suffered his first brush with throat cancer in 1997. Barely recovered, he and his wife Olivia then endured a horrific attack at home at the end of 1999, when intruder Michael Abram came close to killing him, inflicting 40 stab wounds and puncturing his lung in a deranged attack.

Harrison recuperated for six months before returning to work with renewed vigour. Having worked diligently on the 30th-anniversary reissue of *All Things Must Pass*, he began focusing on his next studio album, glorying in the punning Pythonesque working title "Portrait Of A Leg End". Plans to finish the record with Jeff Lynne in March 2001 faltered, however. Lynne was wiped out following a lengthy ELO tour, while Harrison had his own issues.

His cancer had returned, first in the lung, then spreading to the brain. In the summer of 2001 he moved to a villa in southern Switzerland to undergo specialist treatment. While there, as his health rapidly declined, he continued to shape the songs in a makeshift home set-up he dubbed Swiss Army Studios. His final work on the album dates from this period. The last thing Harrison ever recorded, on October 2, 2001, was a vocal overdub for "Horse To The Water", an intriguing Dylanesque narrative on an enduring theme: the inability or unwillingness of those floundering in life to embrace "God realisation". With typically mordant humour, the song was credited to Harrison's new publishing company, R.I.P. Music Ltd.

Less than two months later, Harrison died, aged 58, in Los Angeles on November 29, 2001. The following March, Dhani and Jeff Lynne convened in the same city to complete the album. "George bequeathed it," said Lynne. The songs were already fleshed out with Jim Keltner's drums and Harrison's

CRITICS' VERDICT

"With trusted contemporaries like Jim Keltner around him, Harrison's last words are an allusive yet concrete return to the mysterious world-behind-a-world he visited as far back as 'Within You Without You'."
Nick Hasted, Uncut, December 2002

vocals, guitar parts, keyboards and harmonies. Lynne transferred the analogue tapes to digital, before he and Dhani, working to Harrison's detailed notes, added further instrumentation, trying to join the dots without leaving too many fingerprints. "He left so many clues, including sketches of string arrangements for one song, which he had hummed into the microphone," Lynne recalled. "But it was a maze, a bit of a puzzle that needed to be pieced together very carefully."

Though ultimately perhaps a slicker, sleeker version of the more dressed-down album Harrison had envisaged, *Brainwashed* retains an appealing campfire flavour. The default setting is warm, relaxed folk-pop, characterised by the almost skifflish "Any Road", mixed in places with a laid-back atmosphere redolent of Ry Cooder. The South Seas blues of "Rocking Chair In Hawaii" is cut from the same cloth as "For You Blue", while "Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea", featuring close friends Ray Cooper and Joe Brown, embodies the spirit of the music Harrison most loved playing and listening to in his later years.

Yet there is, unsurprisingly, an elegiac tone. The mortal despair of "Stuck Inside A Cloud" and hard-won wisdom of "Looking For My Life" are sweetened by Harrison's most persuasive melodies for decades, but there's no disguising the pain in both, nor the deep sense of sadness pervading the instrumental "Marwa Blues". "The Rising Sun" deploys several Beatles touches to better emphasise the drastic personal cost to Harrison of being in the band in the first place ("*I was almost a statistic inside a doctor's case*"), before offering heartfelt gratitude at finding an alternate path through life. He confronts his eternally conflicted nature in "Pisces Fish" ("*One half's going where the other half's just been*") and there's a last jab at the Catholic Church in the chugging "P2 Vatican Blues".

Before his death Harrison had made it clear that the title track was intended as his final musical statement. Its world-weariness is unequivocal, a litany of the ills of living on "Bullshit Avenue", delivered in his most unlovely, stridently nasal voice, but between the seemingly unending horrors of the modern world are interpolated cries of "*God, God, God,*" and readings from *How To Know God (The Yoga Aphorisms Of Patanjali)*. The last song on his last album, it leaves no room for equivocation: a musical journey spanning more than 40 years concludes with chants of "Hare Hare" and "Shiva Shiva", drifting over burbling tabla.

Brainwashed was released a year after Harrison's death, on November 18, 2002. A little over a week later, his life and music were celebrated in the Concert For George, held at the Royal Albert Hall on November 29, with guests including Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton, Jeff Lynne, Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers, Monty Python and Tom Hanks. While Harrison's weighty legacy was given due recognition in West London, his most recent album was sympathetically reviewed but sold modestly. *Brainwashed* deserves better, not merely because it's arguably his strongest solo record since the mid-'70s, but because it offers a satisfying final reckoning, the sound of rock's most dedicated seeker balancing the scales of life and death for the last time. ॐ

TRACKMARKS

1. Any Road ★★★★
2. P2 Vatican Blues (Last Saturday Night) ★★
3. Pisces Fish ★★★
4. Looking For My Life ★★★
5. Rising Sun ★★★★
6. Marwa Blues ★★★
7. Stuck Inside A Cloud ★★★★
8. Run So Far ★★
9. Never Get Over You ★★★
10. Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea ★★★
11. Rocking Chair In Hawaii ★★★
12. Brainwashed ★★★★

Label: Dark Horse/EMI
Produced by: George Harrison, Jeff Lynne, Dhani Harrison
Recorded at: (1988–2002) FPSHOT, Oxfordshire; Swiss Army Studios; various locations
Personnel: George Harrison (vocals, guitars, keyboards, bass, slide guitar, dobro, ukulele, banjulele, backing vocals), Jeff Lynne (bass, guitars, piano, keyboards, percussion, backing vocals), Dhani Harrison (guitars, Wurlitzer electric piano, backing vocals), Jim Keltner (drums), Mike Moran (keyboards), Marc Mann (keyboards, string arrangements), Ray Cooper (percussion, drums), Jools Holland (piano), Mark Flanagan (acoustic guitar), Joe Brown (acoustic guitar), Herbie Flowers (bass, tuba), Bickram Ghosh (tabla), Jon Lord (piano), Sam Brown (backing vocals), Jane Lister (harp); Izabela Borzymowska (reading from *How To Know God*)
Highest chart position: UK 29; US 18

"No outside forces could push him"

In all-new interviews with his closest collaborators, GRAEME THOMSON digs deep into George Harrison's working practices to cast new light on the former Beatle – from pioneering solo debut *Wonderwall Music* to the posthumous release, *Brainwashed*. Along the way there are cameos from Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, Joni Mitchell – and Paul McCartney's flugelhorn. "He was emerging from an incredible writing team," one eyewitness recalls, "but he suddenly came up with all this beautiful stuff."

BARRY FEINSTEIN

"His simplicity was beautiful": Harrison at Friar Park during photo sessions for *All Things Must Pass*

Harrison at the Midem music-biz trade fair in Cannes, January 30, 1976

GEORGE HARRISON was only hitting his stride when The Beatles ended. The start of his solo endeavours in 1968 coincided with his rise to greater prominence within the band, and in the immediate post-Fab era he continued to blossom. *All Things Must Pass*, "My Sweet Lord", The Concert For Bangladesh and "Give Me Love (Give Me Peace On Earth)" elevated him to solo superstar status in the early '70s. Thereafter, his career was tidal, powerful waves of creativity subject to the waxing and waning of his enthusiasms in the face of competing interests: spirituality, gardening, fast cars, films. Harrison was in many ways a reluctant solo artist, often happiest in collaboration, yet his vision was stubbornly individual and his music branded with his forceful personality. Whether channelled through rock, pop, soul, country or Indian music, his wire-cutter vocals, signature slide-guitar motifs and mix of spiritual yearning, no-nonsense truth-telling and earthy humour was utterly distinctive. Here, Harrison's closest collaborators reveal the intimate stories behind the music, a tale encompassing death rides in yellow Porsches, lascivious jazzers, Dylan worship and an unforgettable recording session on the day John Lennon died. Through it all, "George was always himself," says his former bandleader Tom Scott. "He was consistent in the space he occupied. His simplicity was beautiful."

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

GEORGE HARRISON WONDERWALL MUSIC APPLE, 1968

Harrison's soundtrack to Joe Massot's film about a mad professor and a Biba girl called Penny Lane is released three weeks before the 'White Album'. With cameos from Eric Clapton and Peter Tork, it's the first Fab solo record, the first album on Apple and a world music crossover before its time.

JOHN BARHAM [MUSICIAN/ARRANGER]: *Wonderwall*... was primarily an extension of his love of Indian music. George became a pupil of Ravi Shankar and he impressed me as being a very respectful and disciplined student. He seemed at ease with the sitar. There were already obvious influences on Beatles songs like "Within You Without You" and "Blue Jay Way".

DAVE MASON: George was an early adopter!

He had done those wonderful Indian tracks on *Revolver* and *Sgt Pepper*, and was learning with Ravi Shankar. He gave me the sitar he'd first learned on. I used it on "Paper Sun", Traffic's first single.

BARHAM: Joe Massot offered him complete freedom in creating a music score for the film, and he took advantage. But it was obvious that George was still intensely involved in his creative work with The Beatles. When we were doing *Wonderwall*, The Beatles were using the same studio; they had it block-booked. There were times when George's sessions finished and the other three Beatles would come in for an evening session. When this happened, George would become re-energised and go into a world apart with the other three that nobody else seemingly could enter. At one session I found a flugelhorn lying around the studio. It turned out to be Paul McCartney's.

ROY DYKE [DRUMS, THE REMO FOUR]: We recorded backing tracks at Abbey Road to accompany certain points in the film. George had timed it all with a stopwatch: "We need one minute and 35 seconds with a country & western feel." Or: "We need a rock thing for exactly two minutes." Nothing was really written. We'd talk over ideas he wanted, play something, and he'd say, "That's good, keep that. I like the piano there." It was very experimental. There were different tracks with different atmospheres, and a few different sessions. The Indian musicians were recorded in Bombay. At another session he used Eric Clapton, who did a great riff on "Skiing". I heard he borrowed a five-string banjo from Paul McCartney for Peter Tork to use!

BARHAM: Big Jim Sullivan, who was recording with Tom Jones at Abbey Road, happened to drop in and played bass on "On The Bed". [*It was*] a free atmosphere, the sessions were very creative and very enjoyable. I was very impressed how well George had mastered [*Indian classical*] techniques. He had dropped in on one of Ravi Shankar's recording sessions for the BBC/Jonathan Miller production of *Alice In Wonderland* at the Shepherd's Bush BBC Centre, which I worked on. At the session we were recording a scene where Ravi soloed and I played an Indian jhala texture on piano. George was fascinated by the combination of sitar and piano, and subsequently at his house in Esher he asked me to play one of my own compositions based on jhala texture. He looked and listened very closely. Later at one of the *Wonderwall* sessions he very abruptly sat down at the piano and with great intensity started playing his own jhala over a chord sequence. We had many discussions about Indian philosophy and spirituality. I'm convinced that George was one of the very few people I've ever met who was on a spiritual journey.

GEORGE HARRISON
ALL THINGS MUST PASS APPLE, 1970
Triumphant triple album produced by Phil Spector in the wake of the Beatles break-up. Includes "Isn't It A Pity", "What Is Life", "Beware Of Darkness" and global hit "My Sweet Lord", the latter subjected to years of litigation over similarities to The Chiffons' "He's So Fine".

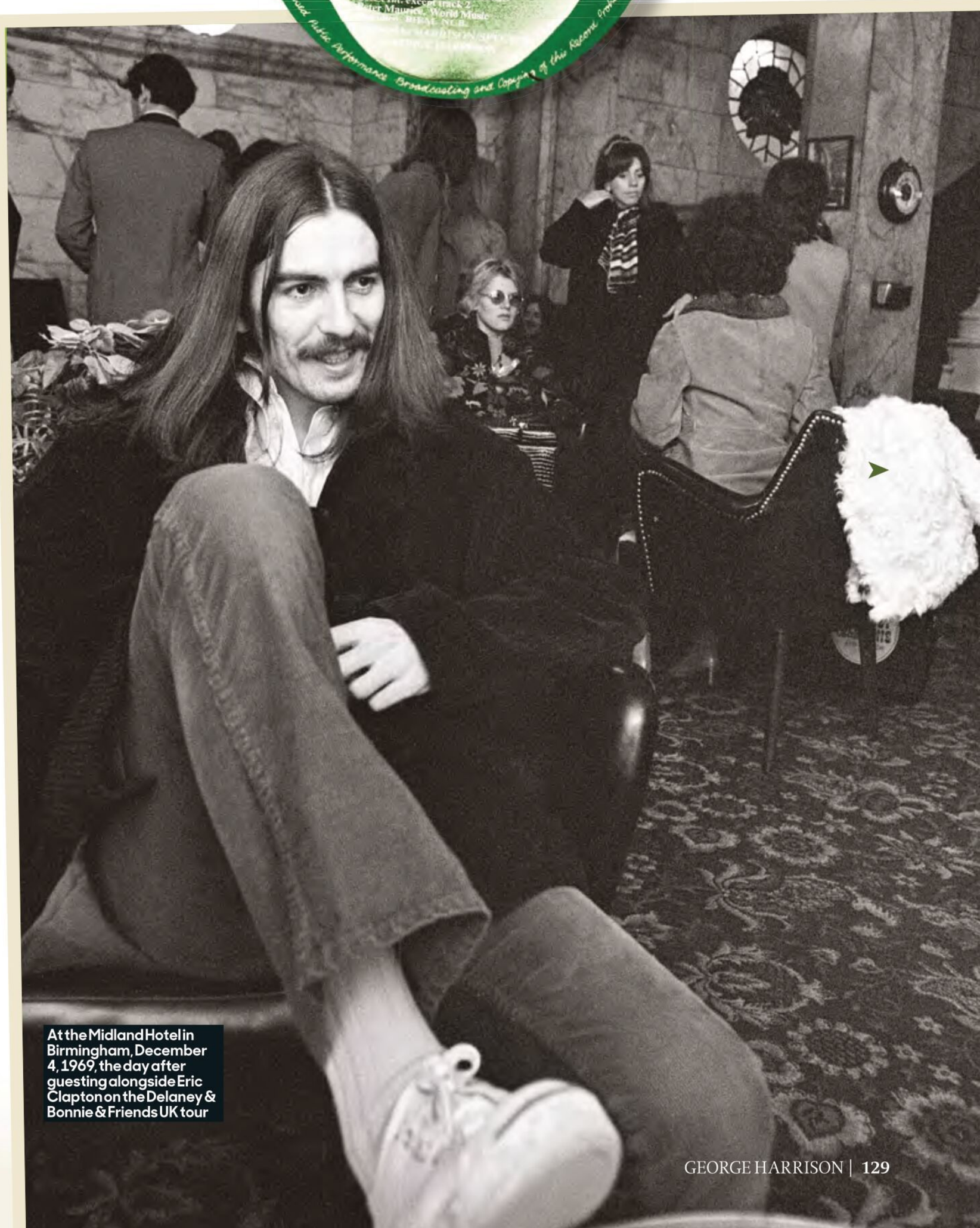
> **"George was very excited at this period. The songs were so great"**
> KLAUS VOORMANN

KLAUS VOORMANN [BASS]: George was very excited at this period; the songs were so great. Some of them they'd already tried with The Beatles, but they fell through. All the contract stuff was ongoing, but between George, John and Ringo there was no problem. They had gone separate ways, they didn't like the same things, but they were still really professional about working together.

ALAN WHITE [DRUMS]: I'd first met George at John's studio when he was making *Imagine*. Everybody had dinner together every night and we talked about his musical ideas. He said, "I want you to come and play on the album."

DAVE MASON [GUITAR]: I was playing guitar with Delaney & Bonnie and we did a show at Croydon. Eric came down, and George was with him. We invited him up to play. He wasn't sure what to do, so I showed him this little repetitive slide-guitar part that I'd put on "Coming Home". We got it down in the dressing room. Years later, George said that one of the reasons he got into that signature slide-guitar sound is that I had showed him this lick. So I got an open invite to come and play on *All Things Must Pass*. I mostly played acoustic rhythm guitar. It was a little bit chaotic – throw it all in the pot and see what comes out.

WHITE: It was pretty organised, actually! He was very together. He



At the Midland Hotel in Birmingham, December 4, 1969, the day after guesting alongside Eric Clapton on the Delaney & Bonnie & Friends UK tour

BIRMINGHAMPOST AND MAIL ARCHIVE/MIRRORPIX/GETTY IMAGES)

"I'm not a Beatle any more!"

INSIDE GEORGE'S SOLD-OUT 1974 AMERICAN TOUR

THE first American outing by any Beatle, Harrison's sold-out American tour of November and December 1974 failed to fulfil heightened expectations. Unprepared for the rigours of performing every night, his voice was already ragged during rehearsals, and further deteriorated during the shows. "His voice was shot," says Andy Newmark, who shared drum duties with Jim Keltner on the tour. "He was not well equipped to work that hard, and it was really bumming him out that when he opened his mouth it was so hoarse. We were all smoking pot and doing coke – but not to excess. The worst thing was that George smoked Gitanes."

On stage, his decision to play only four Beatles songs – "Something", "In My Life", "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" and "For You Blue", sometimes changing the words to reflect his spiritual leanings – prompted promoter Bill Graham to intercede, but to no avail. "George said, 'I was a Beatle once, I'm not a Beatle any more,'" bandleader Tom Scott recalls. "'I'm George Harrison, doing what I want to do. If anybody is unhappy, they can have their money back.' Beatlemania was still hot and heavy, and George paid a price for it."

Ravi Shankar and Alla Rakha opened the show with a set of Indian classical music, which "proved perhaps not to be the best move", says Keltner. The critics were indeed brutal. "It was hard for him. I could see he was a little down," says Newmark. "I could sense he was rattled, but he was still nice and friendly [...] he couldn't have been kinder to us." Aside from some dates in Japan in 1991, he never toured again.

DAVID HUME KENNERLY/GETTY IMAGES

Happy together: with keys wiz Billy Preston at the Capitol Center in Landover, Maryland, December 13, 1974

had a bunch of songs prepared and he knew what he wanted to do each day. George would tell us how it went, the feel and the tempo. He was very serious about his music – quiet, controlled, level-headed. I knew it was going to be a big statement, a Beatle making a solo album – there was a feeling of that in the studio.

VOORMANN: There were no headaches, no confusion. George had prepared the songs and he had enough experience, though he learned a lot from Phil Spector.

WHITE: Spector didn't come out of the control room much. George was out in the studio, he'd go back, and he and Phil would talk a lot about how they were doing it and who was playing on what. Ringo came in the day we were doing "My Sweet Lord". I said, "George, Ringo's here – why doesn't he play the drum part?" He said, "No, I want you to play the drums. Ringo can play tambourine." It didn't make me feel that comfortable! It was very casual like that. I never thought for a million years that "My Sweet Lord" sounded anything like "He's So Fine" when we were in the studio. Maybe I should have been there to testify and say, "Look, I played on this, and there was never one word mentioned about this in the studio." It certainly wasn't conscious. I felt it was pretty unfair.

VOORMANN: George took his time in the studio. He had the EMI people on his back; they thought it was too expensive, they didn't realise that this was going to be such a big hit. George was really pissed off about that, actually.

MASON: He was emerging from an incredible writing team, but he suddenly came up with all this beautiful stuff. He just got overshadowed for a while, but it was always there. George as much as anybody had a very powerful effect in the early '70s. Partly it was about his internal spirituality, which was pretty powerful, and also because on Beatles records he had been relegated to two tunes. Having a record that was all his made a huge difference.

GEORGE HARRISON & FRIENDS THE CONCERT FOR BANGLADESH

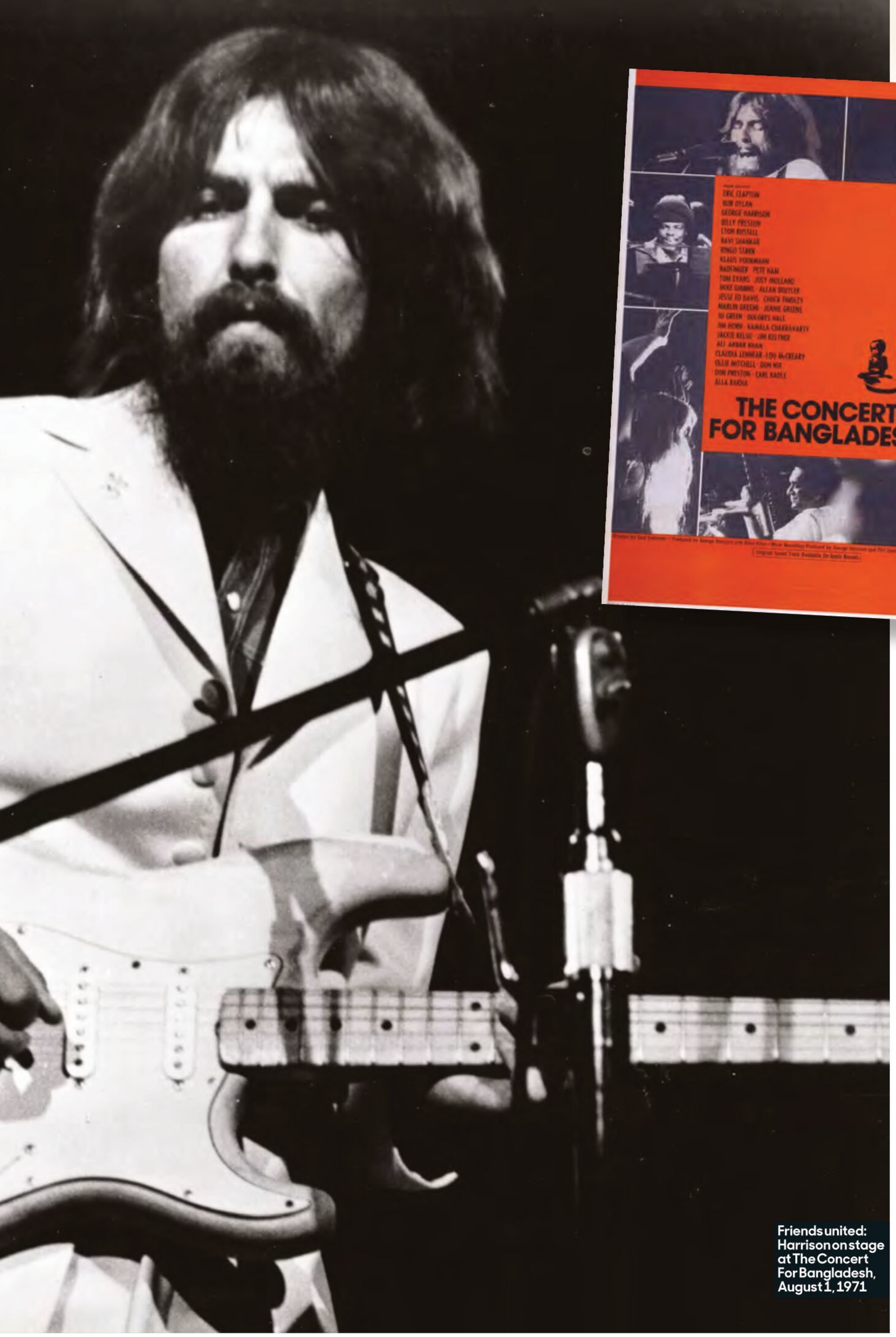
APPLE, 1972

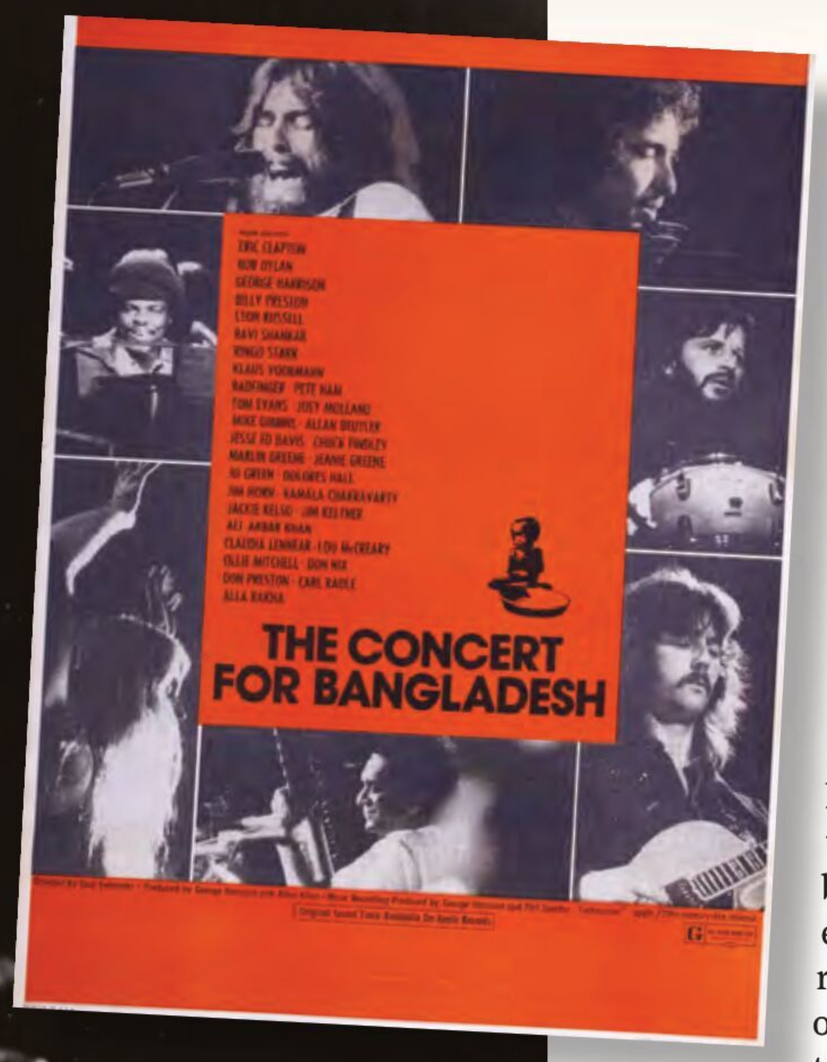
Another triple, this time capturing two concerts held on August 1, 1971 in aid of the refugees of the Bangladesh Liberation War. Organised by and starring Harrison, *The Concert For Bangladesh* features sets by Bob Dylan and Ravi Shankar and a starry band including Ringo Starr, Leon Russell, Billy Preston, Badfinger, Jim Keltner and guest star Eric Clapton.

JONATHAN TAPLIN [CONCERT CO-PRODUCER]: Ravi had come to him and said there was this extraordinary emergency. People were starving, the whole formation of what was then East Pakistan was incredibly disorganised. George wanted to help, and the best way to help was to raise money through a concert.

JIM KELTNER [DRUMS]: He asked me, Leon and Klaus Voormann to play on the single "Bangla Desh". I had no idea that there was going to be a concert! He told me that Ringo would do it if I would do it.

TAPLIN: The whole thing was incredibly spur of the moment. When we looked into getting Madison Square Garden there was literally one day when there wasn't something already booked, so we chose that day: August 1. The core band was established very quickly. It was a tribute to George that he could call people like that and whatever they were doing, they dropped it. Dylan said he would do it but kept hesitating to give the final commitment – but that's the way Bob works. We reserved a rehearsal hall above Carnegie Hall for a week before the concert, and





Friends united: Harrison on stage at The Concert For Bangladesh, August 1, 1971

everyone gathered at the Park Lane Hotel, literally around the corner. Everyone showed up – except, notoriously, Eric. That became the point of panic.

KLAUS VOORMANN [BASS]: We were a little worried about what was going to happen if Eric wasn't there. Jesse Ed Davis from Taj Mahal's band came to help out. I showed him all the songs and we practised together, because he came after the rehearsals were done.

TAPLIN: We told Eric that Jesse would play guitar, and then he miraculously recovered and got on the plane! He was in terrible shape.

KELTNER: Eric had gotten careless, let's say, and he really wasn't feeling well at all. When he got to New York there was scurrying around trying to help get him back in shape. George was great. He was so unfrazzled. Someone who wasn't a frontman and didn't want to be one, he takes this burden on his shoulders and does it because he wants to help a friend. It was typical of George to draw people together and make something happen.

"He had many sides. George had the beautiful ability to put it into his songs"
JIM KELTNER

VOORMANN: He was really good friends with Bob, but he knew Bob was scared to be up there again. Even after the rehearsals, George didn't know if he was going to do it or not.

TAPLIN: Bob didn't turn up to rehearsals – but he did turn up to the soundcheck the night before, and then we knew he was going to do it. The band was so good; it was very easy for them to adapt.

KELTNER: With Ringo and I playing two drumkits, nothing was worked out. The only thing I decided was that I would definitely not play the hi-hat. For me, Ringo's magic started with his hi-hat feel, that sloshing side-to-side style. We played the backbeat together, and it was extraordinary to me that I didn't really have to watch him, because our hearts beat almost in the same tempo. I'd listened to him so much, my time feel was so close to his. When you hear that Bangladesh record, you don't hear two drumkits, yet I can hear both our sounds.

TAPLIN: There was a party back at the hotel. A lot of people were there. The Band had come down from Woodstock. After that, the album took a while. There were issues with Spector and George was a perfectionist. Because he was a Beatle, no outside forces could push him into doing anything any faster than he wanted to do it. It wasn't easy, but it was worth it. It showed other people how you could use your celebrity to do good things.

GEORGE HARRISON
LIVING IN THE MATERIAL WORLD
APPLE, 1973

The intimate follow-up to *All Things Must Pass*, recorded at Apple and Harrison's studio at Friar Park, his neo-Gothic home in Henley-on-Thames. In thrall to Eastern spirituality, the songs movingly lay bare his conflicts, doctrines and, on "Give Me Love (Give Me Peace On Earth")), longings, though some critics hear only hectoring hypocrisy.

KLAUS VOORMANN [BASS]: On *All Things Must Pass*, he had all those songs on the shelf. This was a new bunch, and he wanted to let people know how he felt about those religious aspects of life and put it on a record. For him, it was a deep urge.

JIM KELTNER [DRUMS]: He always spoke about the conflict in his life. It was apparent when you knew him; you could see it. I don't want to talk about his personal life, but he had a lot of contradictions, he had many sides. George had the beautiful ability to put it into his songs.

JOHN BARHAM [ARRANGER]: He was seriously stressed. I think it was most likely the daunting task of attempting to match the extraordinary artistic and commercial success of the last album. They are not among my happiest memories of working with George. I felt that ➤

ESTATE OF KEITH MORRIS/REDFERNS

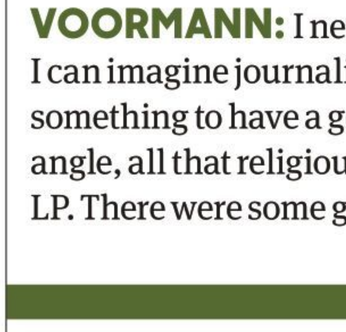
his stress was negatively affecting the working atmosphere in the studio. It sometimes made him short-tempered and irritable.

VOORMANN: I had a great time! We recorded some of it at Friar Park – there was a great atmosphere in that place. On "Be Here Now" he wanted me to play upright bass, and we found out that the toilet in the bathroom, when I put the bass there, that gave us the best sound. So I was playing bass in the bathroom, and then [*former Beatles roadie*] Mal Evans came in, sat on the toilet and flushed in the middle of the song!

JIM KELTNER: We did the tracking at Apple. The songs were just cool, simple little songs, but when we got to "Give Me Love...", I thought to myself, 'This is hard work, this one!' The drums are kind of subdued, but I was playing a very busy little syncopated part, trying to play with the guitar – and George was so easy to play with. When we finally got the take, I remember listening and thinking, 'I wouldn't have got away with that with anybody else.' Any other producer would probably have said, "OK, that's cool, now let's have a proper backbeat and nail it down." By the time we got back to LA we were already hearing it on the radio. One day we got into the car. It was me and my wife Cynthia, George and Pattie, and Richard Perry and Joni Mitchell. We went to the Playboy Mansion and that night in the car they were playing "Give Me Love..." on the radio. It blew my mind. He always said it was a little prayer. I still well up to this day when I hear it.

VOORMANN: I never read any of the reviews. I can imagine journalists hungering for something to have a go about, and that's a good angle, all that religious stuff. But it's a beautiful LP. There were some great songs on there.

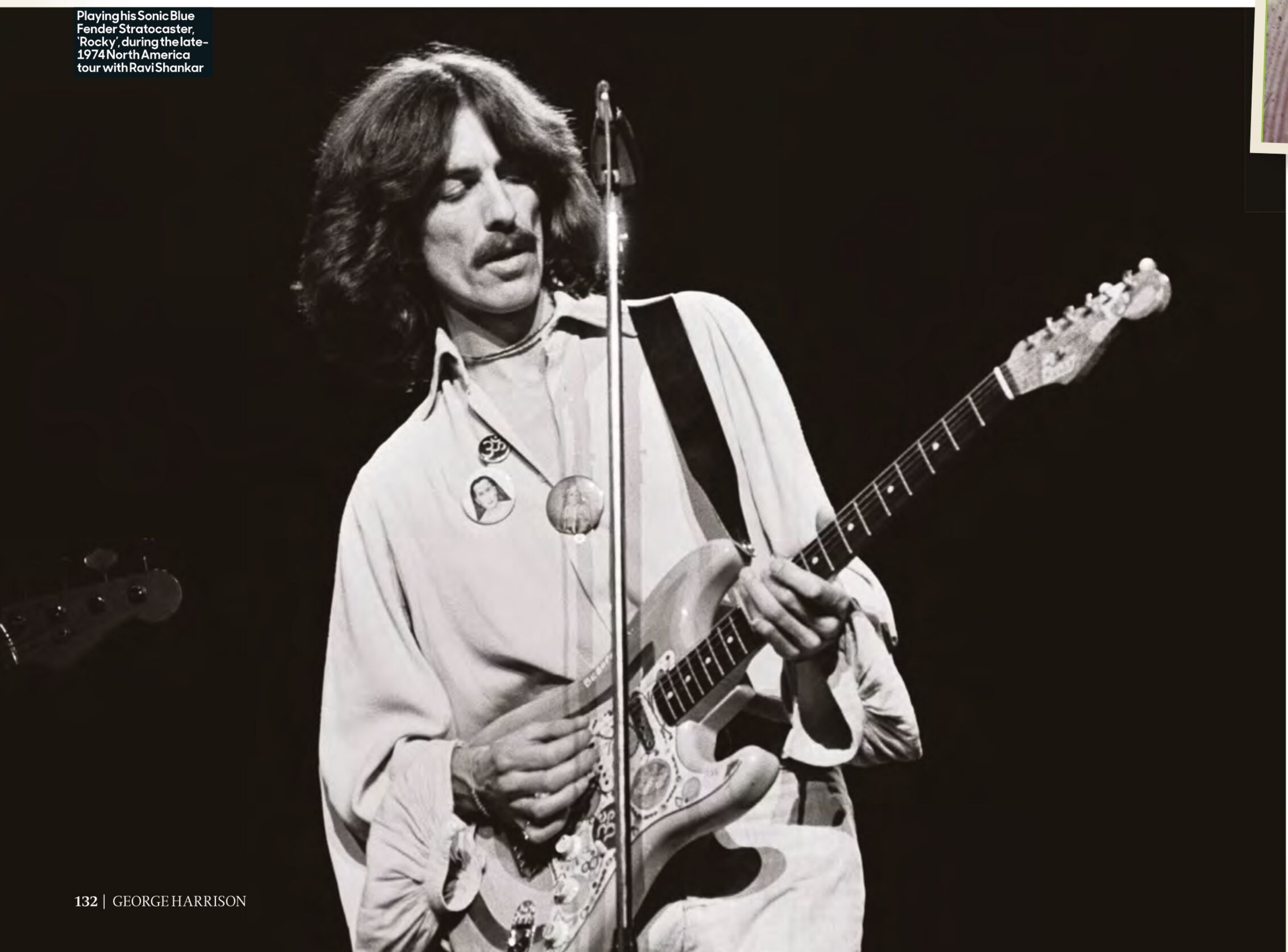
"I felt that his stress was negatively affecting the studio atmosphere"
JOHN BARHAM



GEORGE HARRISON
DARK HORSE
APPLE, 1974

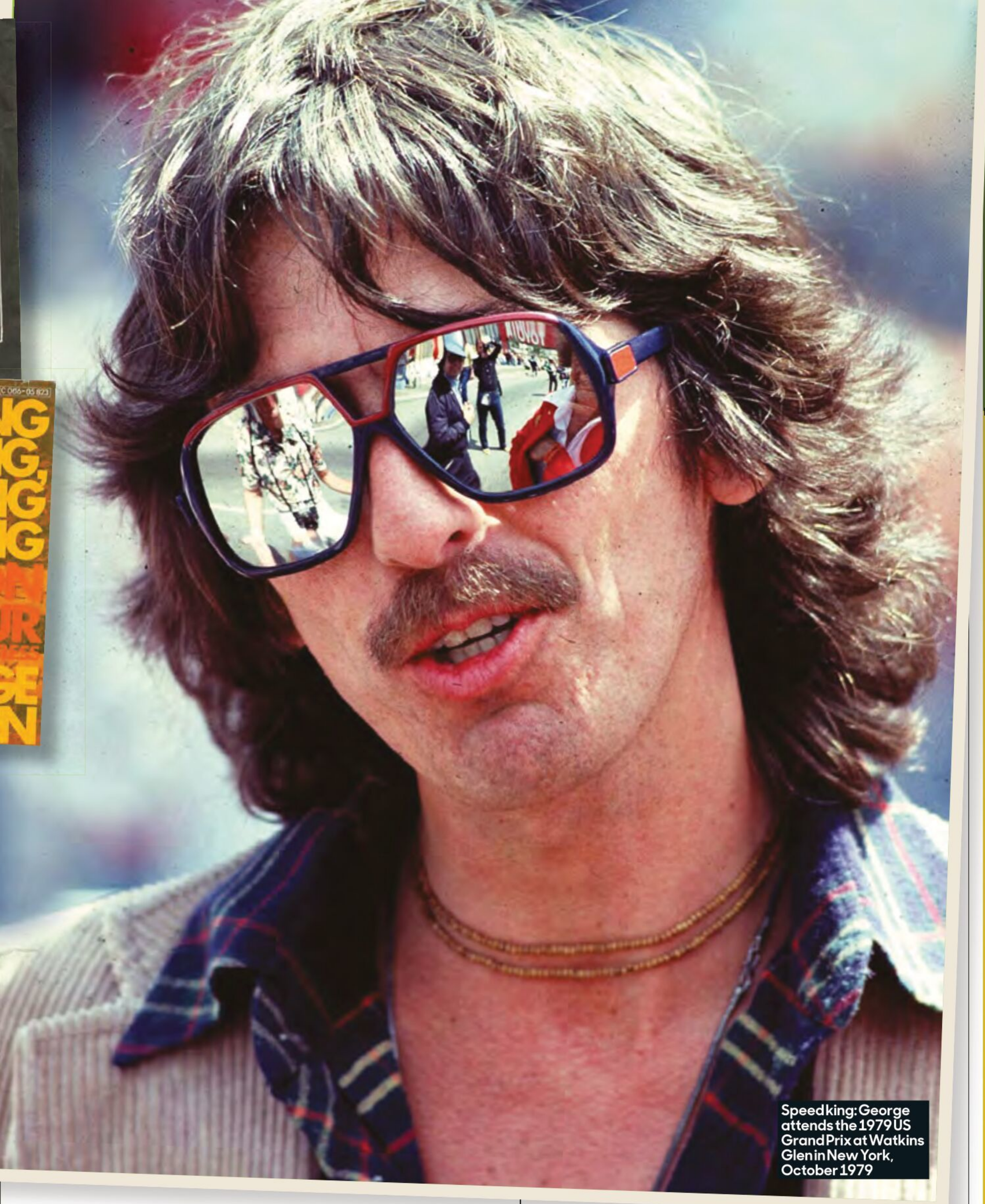
Cataloguing a period of mischief, excess and the end of Harrison's marriage to Pattie Boyd, who left him for Eric Clapton. Recorded at Friar Park and the lot of A&M Studios in Los Angeles, the diary-like songs capture the disjointed, messy spirit of his life during this time.

ROBBEN FORD
[GUITAR]: I was on tour with Joni Mitchell for the *Court And Spark* album, and her backing band was LA Express. In April 1974 we played London, at the New Victoria Theatre, and George came. It was quite a surprise! He was very nice, and he invited us all out to Henley-on-Thames the next day. Joni eventually split, but the whole of LA Express were there. Very late that night we went up to his studio and cut "Hari's On Tour (Express)" and "Simply Shady", the first two songs on the record. We didn't do a lot to perfect those songs. I was even a little surprised that they were on the record!



Playing his Sonic Blue Fender Stratocaster, 'Rocky', during the late-1974 North America tour with Ravi Shankar

STEVE MORLEY/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES



Speed king: George attends the 1979 US Grand Prix at Watkins Glen in New York, October 1979

The Ballad Of Nelson And Lucky

GEORGE AND BOB DYLAN ENJOYED A LONG AND HIGHLY COLLABORATIVE FRIENDSHIP...

LIKE the rest of The Beatles, Harrison fell hard for *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, released early in 1964. Later that year the Fabs met Dylan for the first time, getting stoned together in the Hotel Delmonico in New York. In November 1968, Harrison and his wife, Pattie Boyd, spent time with the Dylans in Woodstock, where they were invited to Thanksgiving dinner at his house on Byrdcliffe Road. The two men wrote "I'd Have You Anytime" together on the same trip. When Dylan and The Band played the Isle Of Wight festival in August 1969, Harrison accompanied him, and in May 1970 they spent two days making music together in New York. Many of the recordings were throwaways, but three songs – "I'd Have You Anytime", "If Not For You" and "I Don't Want To Do It" – were recorded by Harrison during the *All Things Must Pass* sessions, while "Working On A Guru" surfaced on Dylan's *Another Self Portrait*.

Throughout his life, Harrison quoted aphorisms from Dylan songs as though they were scripture. "When we were on tour in 1974," says Jim Keltner, "one night George sat on the hotel room floor with his little tape recorder and played *Blood On The Tracks*. He'd got a pre-release cassette through Bob. He's playing those songs and already singing the words. He was fanatical about Dylan." When the pair teamed up in the Traveling Wilburys, Harrison would film Dylan playing piano and listen back to it at night. "I think George frightened Bob," Tom Petty later recalled. "At the end of the first day, he said, 'We know you're Bob Dylan and everything, but we're just going to treat you and talk to you like we would anybody else...'"

EAMONN MCCABE/POPPERFOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES, BILL RAY/THE LIFE PICTURE COLLECTION VIA GETTY IMAGES

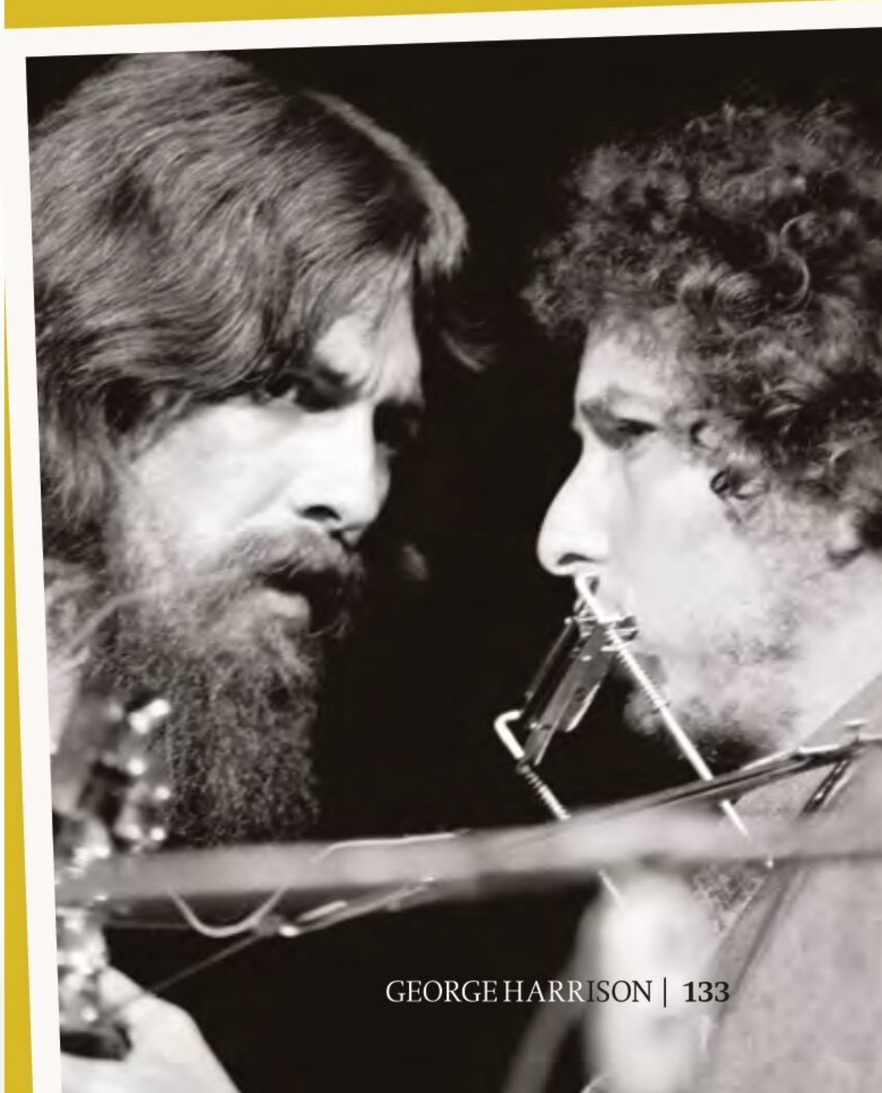
TOM SCOTT [SAXOPHONE]: He was looking to see if LA Express could be his band on his upcoming tour. I didn't know that until later. It didn't work out. Joni and our drummer, John Guerin, were in a relationship and they had a kind of an elitist attitude, which did not go over very well with George. Then our bass player, Max Bennett, proceeded to get wasted on vodka and make eyes at Pattie, in their house! I couldn't believe it. I thought, 'You idiot. Really?'

ANDY NEWMARK [DRUMS]: I met George in the spring of 1974, over at Ronnie Wood's house in Richmond, The Wick. I was there with Willie Weeks recording for Ronnie's first solo album. George came over with a song for Ronnie, "Far East Man", which we recorded with George at Ronnie's house for his album. George asked Willie and I after the session if we would come out to his house a month or two later to record tracks for what became *Dark Horse*. Friar Park was like Disneyland, with all this incredible ornamental woodwork. Massive rooms, the size of football fields. He had a beautiful recording studio up on the top floor overlooking the gardens and lakes. We stayed for a week, and did maybe five or six songs with Billy Preston, me and Willie. He was very open; he let everyone try to figure out their own parts in a very relaxed manner. He was the opposite of dictatorial. Nothing about George reeked of stardom or fame. His marriage was ending, everyone knew that, but it was all friendly and polite and civilised – very English! Pattie and George were at the dinner table and it was all very civil. They were very adult about the way they handled it. They officially split up after we recorded. By September they had separated.

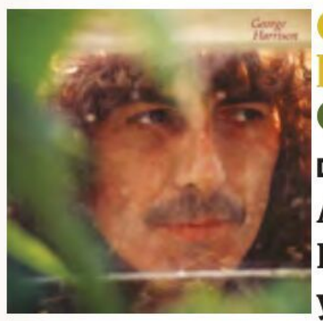
SCOTT: He had started his own label, Dark Horse Records, through A&M. Olivia was the secretary in the American office in Los Angeles. He would call her, and he hung up one day and said, "You know, there's something about her. I'm attracted to her." I said, "You don't even know her!" But of course we know how that turned out...

KLAUS VOORMANN [BASS]: George would go from good to bad. With *Living In The Material World* you had the feeling that now he is very religious, he's meditating and getting up at five in the morning. Then suddenly he goes out and starts doing a lot of coke!

JIM KELTNER [DRUMS]: Everybody was crazy in 1974. Everybody. Lawyers, doctors... not just musicians. Everybody was using too many drugs and drinking too much. You didn't tell George not to do something. He was going to do what he was going to do.



NEWMARK: We finished the album at A&M Studios in Los Angeles while we were rehearsing for the tour, with all the wires going from the sound stage into a recording studio in the main building. It felt a bit rushed. *Dark Horse* was a little drop-off; the golden touch got a little tarnished.



GEORGE HARRISON
GEORGE HARRISON

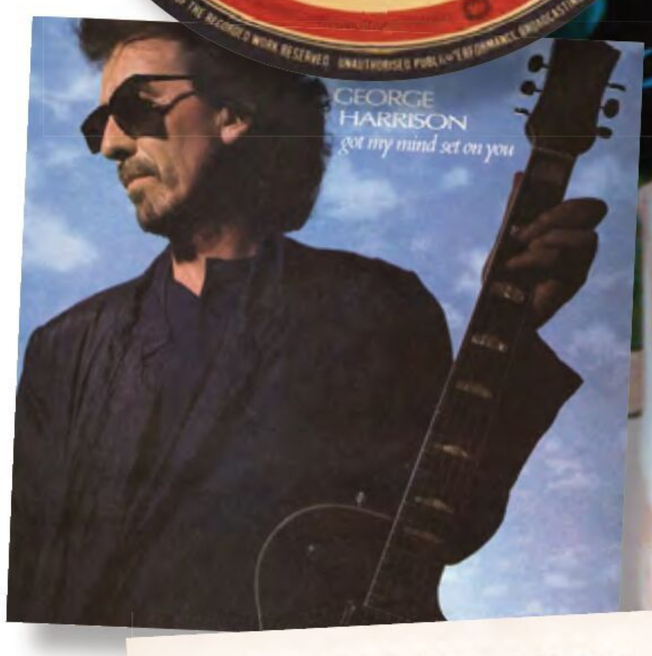
DARK HORSE, 1979

An underrated gem from Harrison's bubble-perm years. A mellow, soft-focus affair, it includes minor hit "Blow Away" and a song held over from the later days of The Beatles, "Not Guilty".

RUSS TITELMAN [PRODUCER]: He had the demos and he invited me over to his house in Benedict Canyon to listen. "Blow Away" was on there and "Faster", "Not Guilty" and "Love Comes To Everyone". He had just the guitar part to "Your Love Is Forever" – no vocal, no lyric. When I heard it, I was floored. I called him and said, "Look, you have to finish this song, please write a lyric." He did. He was going to Hawaii and he was going to come back through Los Angeles. I said, "Why don't you write a song about Olivia?" He came back with "Dark Sweet Lady" and we booked a session and recorded that song at Amigo in North Hollywood. It was the only thing we recorded in America. Then we made plans for me to come to England. He picked me up at the airport in his yellow Porsche, and he high-tailed it back to Friar Park, through little country lanes. He scared the pants off me. White knuckles. Then I finally thought to myself, 'This is a Beatle, I'm not going to die!'

JIM KELTNER: He was a dangerously fast driver. He and Clapton both. It would be scary at times. On the back roads, he loved going through little villages and telling you what the buildings were and when they were built.

TITELMAN: I stayed at Friar Park at the beginning. I had my little room and my Nikon – I pretty much photographed the whole house. After a while, we were working really late hours, so I went down to Henley and stayed at the Red Lion hotel with the band. Olivia was pregnant with Dhani. The first two weeks we worked every day, and then we took a break for a week or so, during which time I got married in Henley – George and Olivia were the witnesses! Then we went back and brought in people. Steve Winwood did all sorts of things on the record. Eric came with Pattie. He was hitting it pretty hard. We were sitting in the kitchen drinking tea, Eric was having a cognac, but it was perfectly fine. No tension. Eric Idle would come with his wife. Jackie Stewart dropped in. George was very good at arranging his records. He played that down, but he had all his parts laid out. His guitar parts were constructions. Very workmanlike, kind of methodical. I would wait for the moments where he would say, "OK, I'll do a solo now," and all of a sudden there would be this beautiful slide sound.



TOM SCOTT [SAXOPHONE]: He was almost too critical of his own shortcomings. But he put that slide on his finger and within two notes you know who it is. He didn't play a blizzard of notes, he wasn't a technical wizard, but what matters is how you communicate on your instrument.

TITELMAN: We did some mixes and he wasn't really happy with them. I think "Not Guilty" and "Your Love Is Forever" are the two that survived, then he remixed it after we left. He had a specific idea about how he wanted it to sound. I think it's one of his better

RICHARD YOUNG/SHUTTERSTOCK

"He was so gracious..."

HEARTBREAKER MIKE CAMPBELL ON GEORGE'S FINAL CONCERT

IN December 1991, Harrison toured Japan with Eric Clapton and his band, a low-key jaunt captured on the album *Live In Japan*. A few months later, on April 6, 1992, he played his last live show, a benefit for the Natural Law Party at the Royal Albert Hall. He asked the Heartbreakers' Mike Campbell to play guitar in his band.

"The rehearsals went pretty smooth," Campbell recalls. "I'll never forget, we were doing 'Something' and when we got to the solo, George stopped the band and said, 'I don't remember how this solo goes!' The entire band, on cue, sang the whole song for him and he goes, 'Oh, OK. Now I remember!'

"Backstage before the show, I was surprised that he was really, really nervous. Almost a little shaky. He said, 'I hope they like me, I hope it goes OK.' He was so gracious and humble. I didn't know if he enjoyed playing live that much, but he rose to the occasion."

"I hope they like me": with Mike Campbell at the Concert For The Natural Law Party, Albert Hall, London, April 1992

The mother of all garage bands: Harrison with Roy Orbison, Bob Dylan, Jeff Lynne and Tom Petty as the Traveling Wilburys, May 1988

albums. We played it for Eric Idle and Ringo, and I remember them applauding after certain songs. They were very supportive, very close. George didn't talk much about The Beatles. In fact, he never talked about it, except one day I was in the studio singing the harmonies on "Getting Better". He walked by me and said quietly, "I sang that part!"

GEORGE HARRISON
SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND
DARK HORSE, 1981
Started the year before John Lennon's murder, it is finished shortly afterwards and contains a poignant tribute, "All Those Years Ago". After it was initially rejected by Warner Bros, Harrison removes four tracks and adds four others before the album is deemed fit for release.

RAY COOPER [CO-PRODUCER/ PERCUSSION]: George understood space. We would sit in the gardens at Friar Park and talk about what we were going to do next, or we would talk about other incidental things which we would bring back into the studio with us, organically. He knew the value of that. He knew how to bring things together. He knew how to listen and how to collaborate. He needed other musicians to play with and someone who could bring about some energy in the recording room.

DAVE MATTACKS [DRUMS]: Ray called on the morning of the session and said, "I'm not sure whether it's going to happen." I asked why. "Have you not heard? John Lennon has been shot." There was a two- or three-hour gap when nothing happened, then Ray called back and the conversation was something along the lines of, "I've spoken to George, and he thinks that trying to make music would be more therapeutic than him sitting around and being besieged by press and God knows what else." So the session went ahead.

COOPER: George had just finished the vocals on "All Those Years Ago", of all things, and I was on my way back home to London in the early hours of the morning. On the radio it was announced that John had been murdered. I turned the car around on the M4 and came straight back. George was devastated. He and John had a very special relationship. He loved him, and he had just written a song about him.

MATTACKS: Ray picked me up at the railway station, and we got to Friar Park and the gates outside were mobbed with press. It got a little bit more serene when we got to the house. I just said, "I'm incredibly sorry about the news. Me and half the world are lost for words." After a while, the session got under way. I was overdubbing a track called "Blood From A Clone". I was trying to do something a little off-centre, because that was what the lyrics of the song implied, it was an anti-drum-machine song. I remember thinking, 'Try and programme this!' Initially George wasn't one hundred per cent sure, but Ray convinced him. It wasn't heated, it was just a discussion between the three of us, and he came around to it. After we'd recorded, in the evening we sat around eating. The conversation got around, very gently, to the crazy fan factor.

COOPER: George had incredible ears. The mixes on the album were very much his. George Martin used to pop in; sometimes he was on his way home and he'd come in for a cup of tea – while I was producing! He was very supportive. I would just sit back and make the tea and listen to their stories.

GEORGE HARRISON
CLOUD NINE
DARK HORSE, 1987
Following a creative dry spell, Harrison hooks up with Jeff Lynne as producer and co-writer. The collaboration is a success, resulting in the hits "When We Was Fab", "This Is Love" and an American No 1 – a cover of James Ray's 1963 song "Got My Mind Set On You".

> **"Conversation got around, very gently, to the crazy fan factor"**
> DAVE MATTACKS

JEFF LYNNE: I went to dinner one night with Dave Edmunds, in Marlow. At the end, as we walked down the street to our cars, he shouted back to me, "By the way, I forgot to mention, George Harrison asked me to ask you if you wanted to work on his next album." I said, "What do you mean, by the way!?" He took me around to George's the next day. I got to the giant portcullis at the front and Olivia said, "George is down by the lake, I'll take you there." He took me into the tunnels and said, "Don't put your hands outside of the boat, just grip with your bum." I thought, 'I like this guy!' We got talking about what we liked, we had a nice day hanging out, then he said, "Do you want to go on holiday?" OK then! We went to his house in Hawaii, then on to ➤

With wife Olivia and Jeff Lynne at the BAFTAs, March 22, 1987

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, BAFTA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Concert For George at the Royal Albert Hall, Nov 29, 2002, with Ringo Starr, Jeff Lynne, Eric Clapton, Dhani Harrison and Paul McCartney

Australia. We landed at the Grand Prix in Adelaide, in the middle of the track in the helicopter, and went around all the pits and had a coffee with all the drivers. It was quite an experience. We went back to this guy's house at night; he had a shooting gallery with a grand piano in there, and that's where we wrote "When We Was Fab". It was so much fun to do. We wrote it on one piano, George at the low end, me at the high end. It came out really well. I was so thrilled with all the little puns and innuendos.

KLAUS VOORMANN: George said, "I have a song and it's reminiscing about the old days. Can you do a cover?" I took the same picture from the *Revolver* cover, the old George, and put a new George on the bottom.

LYNNE: *Cloud Nine* took about six months altogether. I'd go down at the weekend and go home the next weekend. Give him a break from me! The basis of some of the songs is just me and George playing. We had a click track and we'd play along, but we had great musicians to do all the overdubs: Jim Horn on sax, Elton John, Eric Clapton, Keltner on drums. Jim was really important.

JIM KELTNER [DRUMS]: We would play all day and at night George and Jeff would get silly. They were on a roll one night and it was like Monty Python, and out of that came the Traveling Wilburys. I had brought my SP12, my little drum machine sampler. Jeff saw me with the machine and said, "You know the problem with drum machines is they don't swing." I started playing a sample I had brought from a record I had just done in Los Angeles with Andy Taylor and Steve Jones. I was playing this groove. In the back of the room, Gary Wright on keys starts playing the chord progression to "Got My Mind Set On You", then George started singing, Jeff chimed in, and pretty soon we were playing the song. We all flipped out! I laid down my drum track from my SP12, and they all proceeded to overdub on it.

"We'd have five acoustic guitars sometimes, which we would double!"
JEFF LYNNE

LYNNE: Jim used to call himself the Stenographer Of Rhythm – he would type it all into his machine. It's kind of a wacky drum sound, but at the time it was different. We put it on a few tracks where we hadn't put the drums on first. The album was a fantastic success, and George was thrilled. I had a message on my answerphone one day: "Hey Jeff, we've just gone No 1 in America!" You could tell he was really chuffed.

THE TRAVELING WILBURYS
THE TRAVELING WILBURYS, VOL 1
WILBURY, 1988
After using Bob Dylan's house to record a B-side intended for "This Is Love", Harrison and Lynne recruit Dylan, Tom Petty and Roy Orbison to form the mother of all garage bands. Their easy-rocking debut is written and recorded in 10 days at Dave Stewart's house.

JEFF LYNNE: The Wilburys was born a couple of months into *Cloud Nine*. One night, George suddenly said, "You know what? Me and you should have a group!" OK, lovely. Everyone we thought should be in it wanted to join. Roy was the hardest. We went to his concert down in Orange County – me, George and Tom – and went into his dressing room afterwards. George said, "Do you want to be in our group?" He said yes! He knew nothing about it, he just liked the idea. At that point, the only song that was half done was "Handle With Care", which we finished off in Bob Dylan's garage and recorded there.

MIKE CAMPBELL [HEARTBREAKERS GUITARIST]: They asked me to come in to play a guitar part on "Handle With Care". They didn't have the slide intro. I set up my amp, and Tom, Jeff and George are there. I'm trying my best, but I thought, 'Oh my God, I'm playing guitar in front of a Beatle!' I played pretty good, but I said, "I really think George would be better on this, his feel would be much sweeter." So he used my amp and I handed him my guitar. He came up with that beautiful guitar part.

JIM KELTNER [DRUMS]: They cut that track and it wasn't a big deal. It was for a George B-side. They used the drum machine and got Ian Wallace to overdub tom-tom fills. It started from there. The rest was done at Dave Stewart's house in Encino. The first day I walked up to the studio, I could hear this soft singing, and they were all on the front porch, three of them on the swing. They loved being together.

LYNNE: We had very little [*material*] in the back pocket. We finished 10 brand-new songs in 10 days. We would put the guitars on in the morning, first thing. We'd shout out chord sequences and we'd all change on the beat, and it would gradually develop. We would have five acoustic guitars sometimes, which we would double, just to be daft. Ten acoustic guitars for the rhythm track! We wanted to have as much fun as we could. At dinner time, we'd write the words and

SHUTTERSTOCK

the melody. We'd be having dinner and people would be shouting out lines for the tune, and someone would be in charge of jotting those down. Bob got quite a few good ones in. It just happened. Then we sang the rough vocal onto the track. There was a great buzz about it, no egos involved. Everyone got into the spirit.

KELTNER: It was just so much fun. I stayed later one night after tracking, and just sitting around watching those guys write together was hilarious and amazing all at the same time. If you talked to George they were there because of Roy Orbison, but really they were there because of George. Nobody is going to say no to George.

LYNNE: We finished the album over at Friar Park, doing some of the vocals and electric guitars. Instruments were filled in, then we started mixing it. George and I went to Warner Brothers and played it for them, and they were all dancing and singing along in the office. It was a great feeling. They loved it.

KELTNER: George was the one who didn't want to do the Wilburys [*tour*]. Everyone thought it would be Bob that would say no, but it was George. Shame.

GEORGE HARRISON BRAINWASHED

DARK HORSE, 2002

Harrison's death from cancer on November 29, 2001 comes less than two years after an intruder attacks him at home in Friar Park. The rough tracks for his last album, recorded between 1988 and 2001, are completed and mixed by Jeff Lynne and Dhani Harrison, and released in November 2002.

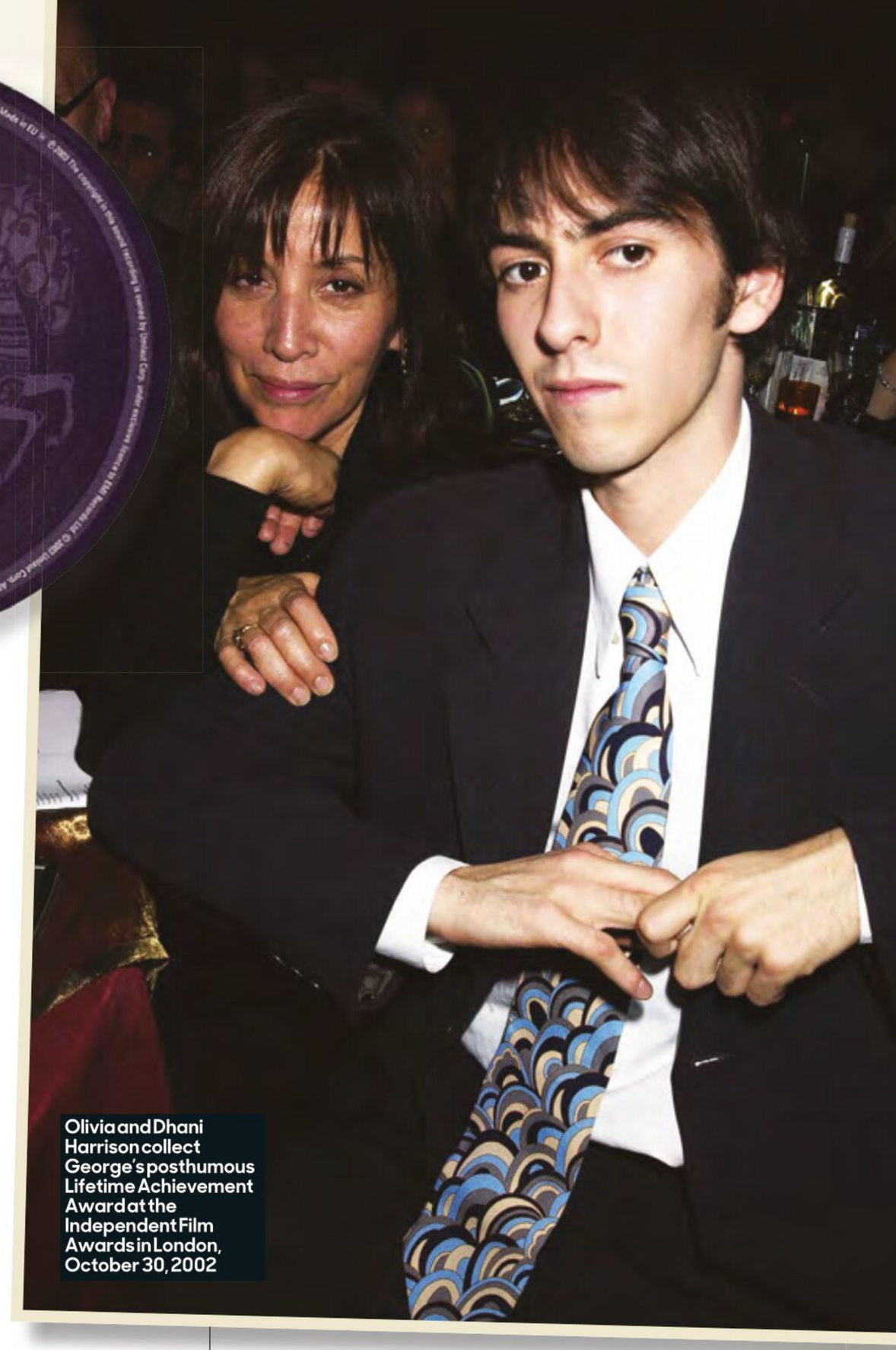
On cloud nine after the success of his latest LP: Harrison photographed in Munich, February 1988

JEFF LYNNE [CO-PRODUCER/ INSTRUMENTS]: Dhani asked me if I could mix it with him at my studio. Working on *Brainwashed* was a very sad thing, because he was a great pal and now he was gone. It was difficult to make decisions when nobody was there to say, "I hate that, you bastard!" Some of it had been done quite a while before [*he died*]. Some songs were just his voice and simple little guitar parts, some lead, or some lovely slide guitar parts. Others sounded like they were finished.

JIM KELTNER [DRUMS]: The drums were done really quickly after George had done the basic tracks. He had laid down the guitars and the rough vocals with Dhani. That's what I played to. It was fun. Then we heard that he'd had an intruder. He and Olivia came to town and asked us to come to their hotel, quite late. They sat together in front of us and they wanted to tell us everything. It was like they needed to; it was cathartic. George's arms were fresh with the scars, purple – they were just healing. You could see where the knife had plunged down and out, all in a line. It was remarkably ugly and frightening, the story even more so. It turns out the alarm system hadn't been activated in a long time. George didn't want to live like that.

The wound through his lung – the good lung, the other one was still healing from cancer – basically did the job. That was it.

KLAUS VOORMANN: He called me when he was in Switzerland, near the end, and I visited him. He was already in pretty bad shape, but he got up and was fun and was joking.



Olivia and Dhani Harrison collect George's posthumous Lifetime Achievement Award at the Independent Film Awards in London, October 30, 2002

He had no hair on his head, just a little bunch on the back that he couldn't get to, and he gave me a razor and said, "Hey Klaus, can you get that for me?" So I cut the last hairs on his head. He was laughing and soothing us, making us feel good. He said, "It's only our shell, it doesn't matter if I live for 30 more years or one. It's OK, don't be sad."

KELTNER: We last saw him at Mo [*Ostin's*] beach house. He said, "You'll never know what you've meant to me, Jim," and gave me a big hug. I said, "Oh, you'll be around longer than me, man!" When we drove off, my wife said, "You know he was saying goodbye to us, don't you?"

LYNNE: His life was in those final songs, the things he got up to each day, like riding down the River Thames. Lots of very personal stuff. Some of them are really good. We gradually just filled them in. It was just about mixing them and making them sound like George would like them. You just had to go with your gut feeling. I felt so bad for Dhani having to do that, after his dad had just passed on, but he really wanted to do it. He's a good lad, Dhani. It was joyful when it sounded great – "Well done, George, nice one!" – but such a shame he wasn't there to hear it with us.

A 50th-anniversary deluxe edition of ***All Things Must Pass*** *is out now*

FRYDERYK GABOWICZ/PICTURE ALLIANCE VIA GETTY IMAGES), DAVE BENETT/GETTY IMAGES

GEORGE SOLO

LIVE AND COMPILATIONS

RELEASED 1976-2012

An inauspicious early Best Of is more than made up for with stunning posthumous collections and live tributes. *BY* PETER WATTS

PERHAPS it was bad luck, perhaps it was George's somewhat lackadaisical approach to his own legacy, but his music was not served well by compilations until after the musician's death.

It started to go wrong in 1976. Harrison had moved from Beatle to acclaimed '70s icon, but when his debut compilation was released it failed to reflect his standing. That's partly down to timing. **The Best Of George Harrison** PARLOPHONE, 1976 ★★★ was issued in November 1976, 11 months after Harrison's contract with EMI/Capitol had expired. That left the label with the freedom to pull together a greatest hits album without consulting the artist and the opportunity to release it whenever they liked. As a result, what should have been a tribute to Harrison's hugely successful solo career became a pick-and-mix of solo hits and Beatles tracks, which was released simultaneously with Harrison's first record on Dark Horse, *Thirty-Three & ⅓*. To add to the fun, the first UK release of the *Magical Mystery Tour* LP and McCartney's gargantuan *Wings Over America* were in the shops at the same time. For Harrison, this was deliberate sabotage.

In some ways, it was his own fault. John and Ringo had ensured they released their own solo comps in 1975 when they were still contracted to Apple, so that meant *Shaved Fish* and *Blast From Your Past* consisted solely of post-Beatles material. Harrison hadn't moved as quickly, so by the time *The Best Of George Harrison* came out, Capitol/EMI were able to cash in on the nostalgia for The Beatles that had begun with the summer's best-selling, slipshod *Rock'n'Roll Music* compilation.

Which is all perfectly true and fair, but doesn't change the fact *The Best Of George Harrison* is pretty good listening, containing a stack of classic songs and demonstrating a seamless transition from Beatles to solo work (something that works best on the original vinyl) with no diminished quality across the whole. It remained a solid seller for the next 35 years and went straight into the US Top 10 after Harrison's death in 2001, partly because there was no other Harrison comp to compete with it.

CRITICS' VERDICT

THE DARK HORSE YEARS
"Taken as a body of work, [it] remains largely second-division Harrison with the occasional contender for promotion."
Kit Aiken, Uncut, April 2004

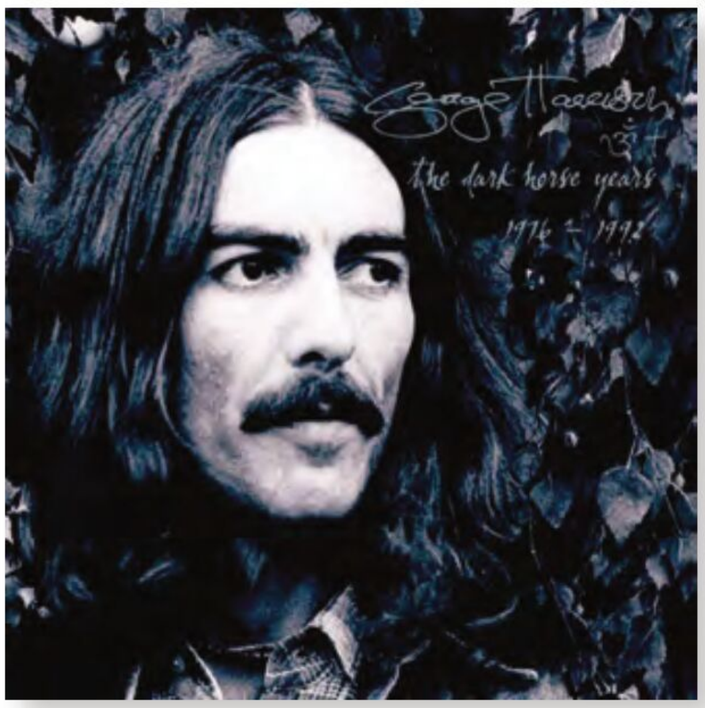
LET IT ROLL
"A proper career retrospective – not a Beatley makeweight – that carefully omits some of the duffers of Saint George."
David Quantick, Uncut, July 2009

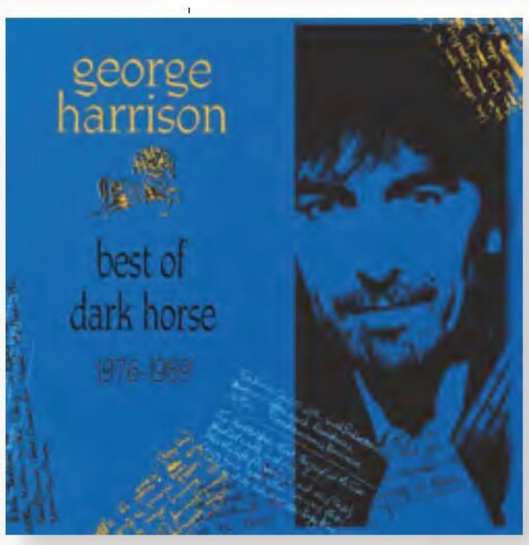
EARLY TAKES: VOL 1
"A delightful and charming addition to the original body of George's work."
David Quantick, Uncut, July 2012

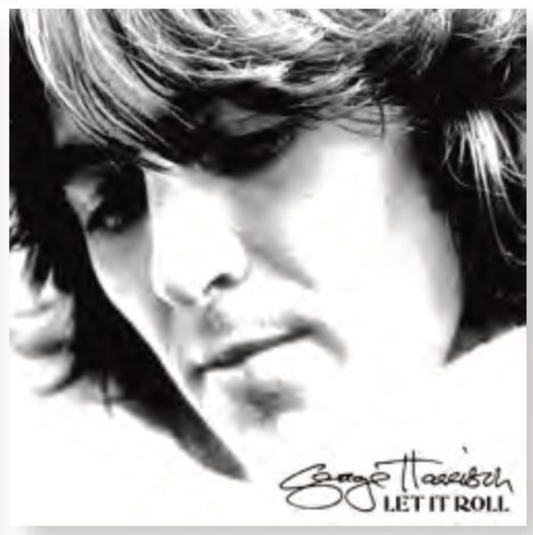
In 1989, Harrison had released **Best Of Dark Horse 1976–1989** DARK HORSE, 1989 ★★★★, but this was out of print by 2001 and remains so today. Compiled by Harrison, it rounded up Harrison's post-EMI work, pulling hits and album tracks from the Dark Horse label. This included two previously unreleased songs – the pleasant if plodding "Poor Little Girl" and the '80s-sounding blues "Cockamamie Business" – as well as the excellent, understated "Cheer Down", co-written with Tom Petty for the *Lethal Weapon 2* soundtrack. The rest of the comp features a mixture of hits – "Crackerbox Palace", "Blow Away", "All Those Years Ago", "Got My Mind Set On You" and "When We Was Fab" – interspersed with LP tracks like "Here Comes The Moon", "Cloud 9" and "That's The Way It Goes".

It's a testament to Harrison's talent that he could put together such a strong selection of songs from what many would consider his least productive period – and that's without including a couple of charting singles ("This Song", "This Is Love") or anything by the Traveling Wilburys. Even today, it's the only place you can hear "Poor Little Girl" and "Cockamamie Business", making it essential for completists.

These two orphans weren't included on **The Dark Horse Years 1976–1992** DARK HORSE, 2004 ★★★★, an eight-disc boxset released in 2004. This was part of a campaign to get Harrison's overlooked solo catalogue back on the shelves – which he himself had encouraged before his death with the reissue of *All Things Must Pass*. The box included all five Dark Horse studio albums plus *Live In Japan*, with a selection of bonus tracks tacked on to the end of each album. These were mainly demo versions of album tracks, but there were also hard-to-find tracks like "Shanghai Surprise", written for the film of the same title, and "Tears Of The World", which had been left off *Somewhere In England*. The Dark Horse box was belatedly followed a decade later by **The Apple Years 1968–1975** APPLE, 2014 ★★★★. This was an Apple-compiled boxset containing *Wonderwall Music*,







Electronic Sound, *All Things Must Pass*, *Living In The Material World*, *Dark Horse* and *Extra Texture (Read All About It)*. It was programmed as a companion to *Dark Horse*, so came with a DVD featuring promos and excerpts from *The Concert For Bangladesh*. Every album again contained a couple of bonus songs as a postscript, including tracks like a demo of "Beware Of Darkness", the *All Things Must Pass* outtake "I Live For You", an instrumental version of "The Inner Light", and a new mix of "Bangla Desh". It is a handsomely packaged, well-remastered collection, but without enough rarities for many fans.

In between these two releases came **Let It Roll: Songs By George Harrison** DARK HORSE/PARLOPHONE/APPLE, 2009 ★★★★. This 20-track comp was the estate's attempt to update, replace and ultimately erase *The Best Of George Harrison* from history. The consistency of Harrison's sound across three decades is remarkable, with tracks from *Brainwashed* carrying much the same texture as those from *All Things Must Pass*. It emphasises that Harrison matured early, finding a sound that worked and sticking with it while his peers flitted from genre to genre.

Unlike so many greatest hits compilations, the album was also genuinely needed and as a result went to No 4 in the UK, making it his highest-charting album since *Living In The Material World*. *Let It Roll* was followed by the miraculous **Early Takes: Volume 1** UM, 2012 ★★★★★. This contained 10 tracks – a mixture of demos, early takes and unreleased recordings – that had featured in the deluxe editions of Martin Scorsese's documentary, but deserved wider accessibility. There's a loving feel to the package, exemplified by the cover, easily the best for any Harrison comp. The tracks were taken from his personal collection at Friar Park and were remastered by Giles Martin at the request of Dhani Harrison – two sons maintaining bonds established by their fathers many decades before. They come from Harrison's most fertile period, with six of them demos for *All Things Must Pass*. Harrison delivers wonderful renditions of "My Sweet Lord", "All Things Must Pass" and a rapturous first take of "Awaiting On You All". He also tackles a couple of covers: there's a wonderful "Mama You've Been On My Mind" and a delicate "Let It Be Me". It's thrilling to hear George's guitar in such fine detail as he picks his way through an early take of "Woman Don't You Cry For Me", a song written in 1969 and considered for *All Things Must Pass* but not released until *Thirty-Three & ⅓*. It would be nice to think there are more live recordings – many of the shows from the 1974 tour are knocking around as bootlegs. As it is, the only Harrison-related live music other than *Live In Japan* and *The Concert For Bangladesh* is the posthumous **The Concert For George** WARNER BROS, 2003 ★★★★, which was arranged a year after Harrison's death at the Royal Albert Hall. The concert was curated by Eric Clapton, who managed to give a more rounded sense of the man beyond The Beatles, ensuring that Monty Python and Indian classical music both had their moments. It also brought some genuine rock heavyweights to the table – the only real absentee is Bob Dylan – with both Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr rocking along. There was little of the usual self-serving grandstanding found at such events; instead there's a genuine but low-key outpouring of love and affection.

Harrison found a sound that worked and stuck with it

Eight days a week?: Harrison ponders Ravi Shankar's estimate of the time it takes to master the sitar, late '60s

MISCELLANY

My sitar's quantum leaps

Mentored by the great Ravi Shankar, George spent the last 35 years of his life immersing himself in Indian music. BY JOHN LEWIS

NEVER mind Liverpool or Hamburg, Abbey Road or Henley-on-Thames – perhaps the single most significant place in George Harrison's professional career was a 1920s semi-detached house in the North London suburb of Finchley. It was here, in the home of Ayana Deva Angadi, the Trotskyist journalist and arts promoter who had run the influential Asian Music Circle since the late 1940s, that in June 1966 George Harrison met Ravi Shankar.

It was a relationship that would change his life. Within weeks he was meeting Shankar in Bombay (in disguise, sporting a moustache for the first time), travelling to Srinigar with him, taking sitar lessons and immersing himself in Indian music, something that would become a major preoccupation for the final 35 years of his life. Shankar became a mentor, a friend and a father figure.

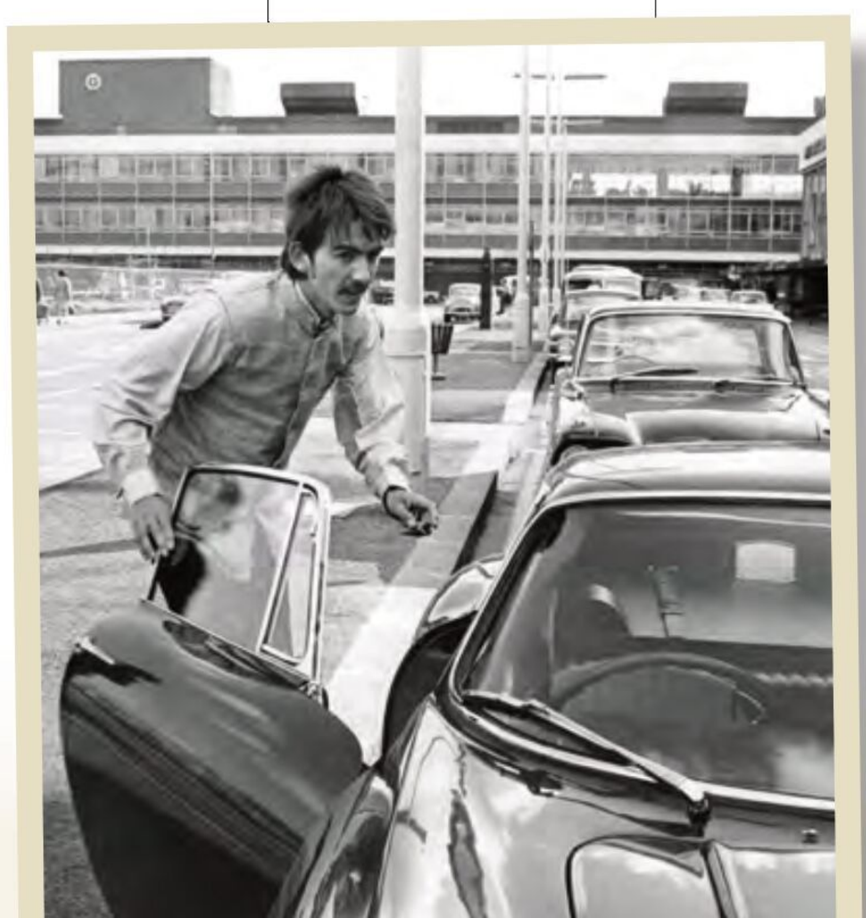
By the mid-1960s Indian classical music had been percolating into the British consciousness for a while. Harrison was just one of many Western musicians who became regular guests at Dev Angadi's gatherings in Finchley – the likes of Benjamin Britten and Yehudi Menuhin had been visiting since the 1950s, while George Martin would often contact Angadi when he required Indian musicians for, say, a Peter Sellers track that he was producing.

Harrison was introduced to Shankar's music in early 1966 by his friends David Crosby and Roger McGuinn, who were both signed to the same US label as Shankar, World Pacific. But his interest in Indian music dates back a year earlier. After hearing sitar-led versions of Beatles songs on the soundtrack to *Help!*, Harrison bought himself a sitar from a music shop on Oxford Street and proceeded to grapple with it on the recording of John Lennon's "Norwegian Wood" in October 1965.

Although most listeners will not have noticed, Harrison's sitar playing on that session is so rudimentary that it disgusted Ravi Shankar when it was played to him. Shankar informed Harrison that mastering the sitar was something that would require at least eight hours a day practice for around five years. Harrison never committed to this (he'd virtually given up the instrument by the end of the 1960s), but he had improved markedly on it by the time he'd recorded "Within You Without You" in 1967 and "The Inner Light" and the *Wonderwall Music* album the following year. He was also translating the use of harmonium and tamboura drones into pop songs on tunes like "Blue Jay Way" and "Only A Northern Song". Through George's agency, Apple also provided relief funding to *Raga*, a film by Howard Worth about Shankar, which received a limited release in 1971.

By 1968 Harrison was collaborating with the Radha Krishna Temple, the Bloomsbury headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), writing and producing "Hare Krishna Mantra", a song that

At London (now Heathrow) Airport to meet Ravi Shankar, 1966



JOHN VAN HASSELT/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES, PICTURELUX / THE HOLLYWOOD ARCHIVE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Raga role: the other Beatles watch George receiving sitar tuition from a Sikh teacher

Harrison lures Shankar further out of his classical comfort zone in the mid-'70s

earned an appearance on *Top Of The Pops* in August 1969, reaching No 12 in the UK and – amazingly – topping the chart in numerous countries, including Germany. That simple, devotional mantra style was clearly an influence on "My Sweet Lord", a hit the following year.

Eventually Harrison's informal jam sessions with the ISKCON members were formalised into an album of Vedic chants, **The Radha Krsna Temple** APPLE, 1971, ★★. The songs are simple mantras, repeated over and over again; some, like "Govinda" and "Sri Isopanisad", are set to strummed acoustic guitars and smooth, radio-friendly string sections; others, like "Bhajahu Hunre Mana" and "Bhaja Bhakata/Arati", are ancient spiritual "bhajas" set to drones, bells and simple tabla patterns – all very much setting the blueprint for what we still expect of a "Hare Krishna" marching band to this day.

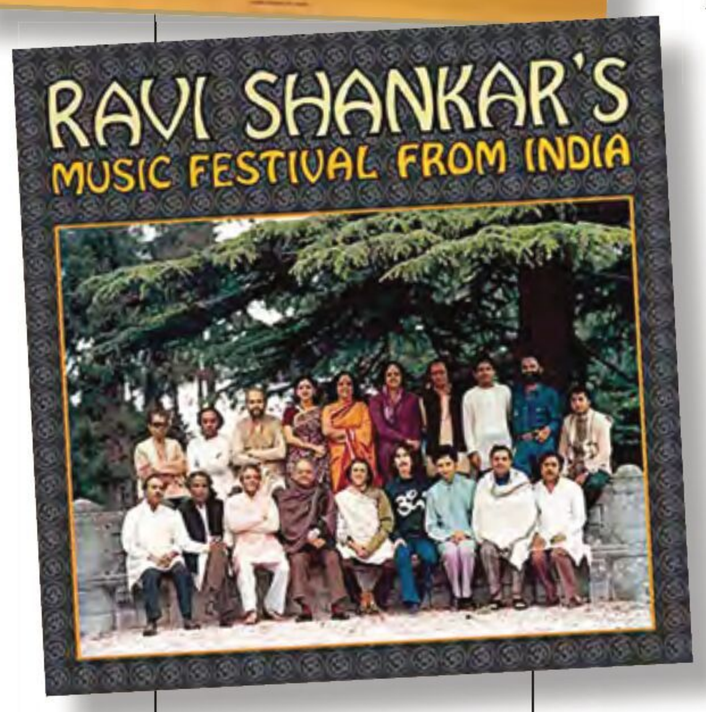
A more substantial album came with Harrison's first formal collaboration with Ravi Shankar. **Shankar Family & Friends** 1974, DARK HORSE, ★★★. Recorded in Los Angeles, it is an ambitious album featuring some noted Indian soloists (Hariprasad Chaurasia on bansuri flute, L Subramaniam on violin, Alla Rakha on tabla) as well as some top-flight British and American session men (Jim Keltner, Tom Scott, Billy Preston and Nicky Hopkins join the likes of Ringo Starr). Harrison serves as producer, plays guitars and autoharp, and also arranges the song's sickly-sweet but oddly likeable lead single, "I Am Missing You". A naive and childlike piece sung by Ravi's sister-in-law Lakshmi Shankar, it would be the first release on Harrison's Dark Horse imprint and was the kind of dreamy ballad that wouldn't sound out of place on *All Things Must Pass*.

Interestingly, Harrison lures Ravi Shankar very far out of his comfort zone. Shankar might have written symphonies, ballets, film soundtracks and sitar concertos throughout his career, and collaborated with the likes of Yehudi Menuhin and Philip Glass, but his East-West fusions have never yielded so much to his collaborators as he does on *Shankar Family & Friends*. Side Two features a lengthy song suite entitled "Dream, Nightmare & Dawn", originally written for a ballet. "Lust" is a curious piece of whimsical funk, "Dispute & Violence" is a jerky jazz waltz starting with duelling Indian voice percussionists and featuring saxophonist Tom Scott and Emil Richards, while "Disillusionment" is a space-age Moog symphony featuring Stevie Wonder's producers Malcolm Cecil and Robert Margouleff. Even the more orthodox Indian tracks like "Festivity & Joy" have a certain baroque rock quality.

The same year, Harrison produced Ravi Shankar's **Music Festival From India**, DARK HORSE, 1976 ★★★, an intense live concert recorded at London's Royal Albert Hall, with a cast of 17 musicians including all the heavyweight Indian soloists from the last album (Alla Rakha, Hariprasad Chaurasia, L Subramaniam, Harihar Rao). Alongside the instrumentalists, however, it's the massed unison vocals from Lakshmi Shankar, TV Gopalkrishnan, Kamala Chakravarty, Viji Shankar and others who transform this classical recital into a joyous, full-throated celebration.

In 1987 came another Shankar collaboration, **Tana Mana** PRIVATE MUSIC, 1987 ★★★. The prime interest for Harrison fans will be the track "Friar Park", recorded at Harrison's home studio of the same name, and produced by the Beatle. It is a lovely piece of fusion, one where George's sensitive accompaniment on autoharp, synth drones and backing vocals mesh well with Shankar's half-speed sitar solo, while Harrison's tuned percussion recalls Steve Reich.

A decade on came the final Harrison/Shankar collaboration, and their best. **Chants Of India** ANGEL/EMI, 1997 ★★★★, is a series of drone-laden Vedic chants, recorded by classical Indian vocalists and musicians in Madras, with strings and other instruments added in London. Harrison produces and plays acoustic guitar, autoharp, bass and assorted tuned percussion, and also multi-tracks his voice to create the hypnotic, baritone-voiced chants. There is no attempt at fusion, but Harrison's very subtle contributions somehow add a heaviness and intensity to each performance that makes this seemingly austere collection quite compelling to rock ears.



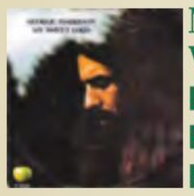
The 2010 collection **Collaborations**, DARK HORSE, 2010 ★★★★, is a four-disc set that pairs the *Chants* and *Family & Friends* albums with *Music Festival From India*, a Shankar-fronted classical revue – along with a film of a 1974 Albert Hall performance, which Harrison introduces.

Shankar would outlive Harrison by 11 years, and fondly recalled the Beatle he described as one of his closest friends. "He really went deep into our culture, our old religion, our spiritual books, especially the Vedic culture," he told *Uncut* in 2011. "And, because his mind was already so developed, teaching him was always a joy. He was a very good student and a truly lovely man." ॐ

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES, ANWAR HUSSEIN/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

George's singles, guest appearances, rarities and remixes. Also: *Get Back*, edited for George!

UK SINGLES DISCOGRAPHY:



MY SWEET LORD / WHAT IS LIFE
Label: Apple
Released: 15 Jan 1971
Highest chart position: 1
The first No 1 hit from a solo Beatle. It reached the top for a second time when reissued in January 2002, two months after his death.

BANGLA DESH/DEEP BLUE
Label: Apple
Released: 30 July 1971
Highest chart position: 10
Released to raise public awareness of the plight of refugees after the Bangladesh Liberation War. The B-side was written for Harrison's mother, Louise, who'd recently died from cancer.

GIVE ME LOVE (GIVE ME PEACE ON EARTH)/MISS O'DELL
Label: Apple
Released: 25 May 1973
Highest chart position: 8
The B-side is a paean to former Apple employee Christine O'Dell.

DING DONG/I DON'T CARE ANYMORE
Label: Apple
Released: 6 Dec 1974
Highest chart position: 38
"I did it in one take," Harrison explained of the hurried B-side. "The story was in the attitude: I-don't-give-a-shit!"

DARK HORSE / HARI'S ON TOUR (EXPRESS)
Label: Apple
Released: 28 Feb 1975
Highest chart position: Did not chart

YOU/WORLD OF STONE
Label: Apple
Released: 12 Sept 1975
Highest chart position: 38

THIS GUITAR (CAN'T KEEP FROM CRYING)/MAYA LOVE
Label: Apple
Released: 6 Feb 1976
Highest chart position: Did not chart
The final release on Apple.

THIS SONG/ LEARNING HOW TO LOVE YOU
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 19 Nov 1976
Highest chart position: Did not chart
Harrison's first 45 on Dark Horse.

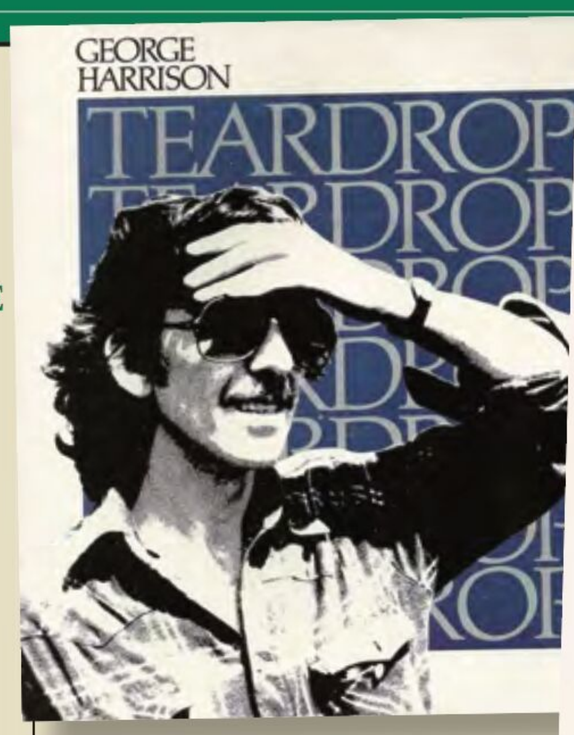
TRUE LOVE/ PURE SMOKEY
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 11 Feb 1977
Highest chart position: Did not chart

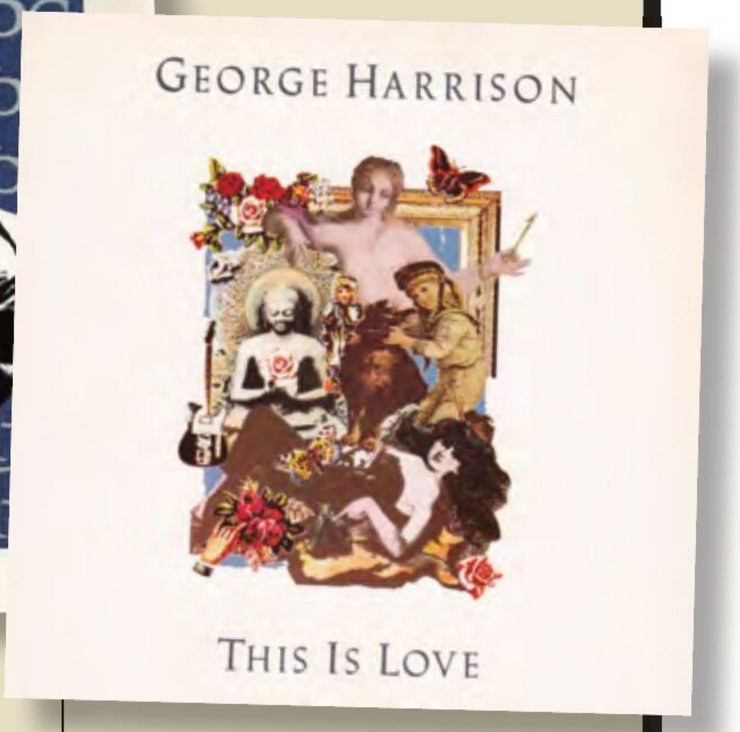
IT'S WHAT YOU VALUE/WOMAN DON'T YOU CRY FOR ME
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 31 May 1977
Highest chart position: Did not chart

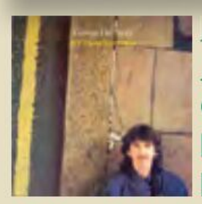
BLOW AWAY/ SOFT TOUCH
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 16 Feb 1979
Highest chart position: 51

LOVE COMES TO EVERYONE/SOFT-HEARTED HANA
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 20 April 1979
Highest chart position: Did not chart

FASTER/YOUR LOVE IS FOREVER
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 30 July 1979
Highest chart position: Did not chart
Issued to raise funds for a cancer charity set up by late Swedish racing driver Gunnar Nilsson.







ALL THOSE YEARS AGO/WRITING'S ON THE WALL
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 15 May 1981
Highest chart position: 13

TEARDROPS/SAVE THE WORLD
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 30 July 1981
Highest chart position: Did not chart

WAKE UP MY LOVE / GREECE
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 8 Nov 1982
Highest chart position: Did not chart

GOT MY MIND SET ON YOU/LAY HIS HEAD
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 12 Oct 1987
Highest chart position: 2
Only kept off the No 1 spot by T'Pau's "China In Your Hand".

WHEN WE WAS FAB/ ZIG ZAG
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 25 Jan 1988
Highest chart position: 25
The B-side is a forgettable instrumental from the equally unmemorable Madonna flick *Shanghai Surprise* (1986).

THIS IS LOVE/BREATH AWAY FROM HEAVEN
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 13 June 1988
Highest chart position: 55
"Handle With Care" was originally intended for the B-side, though Warner execs wisely decided to save it for the launch of the Traveling Wilburys.

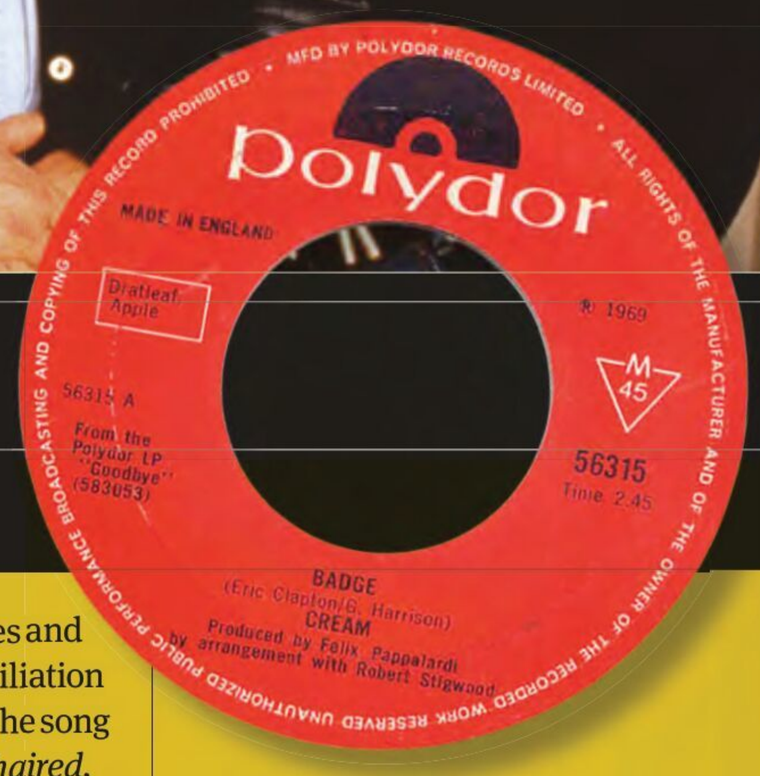
CHEER DOWN/ POOR LITTLE GIRL
Label: Dark Horse
Released: 27 Nov 1989
Highest chart position: Did not chart
Written by Harrison and Tom Petty, it appeared on the soundtrack of *Lethal Weapon 2* after Eric Clapton had passed on it for *Journeyman*.

ANY ROAD/ MARWA BLUES
Label: Dark Horse / Parlophone
Released: 12 May 2003
Highest chart position: 37
The B-side won a Grammy for Best Pop Instrumental Performance, while "Any Road" lost out to Justin Timberlake's "Cry Me A River" at the same awards ceremony. ***ROB HUGHES***

Harrison with fellow Traveling Wilburys Dylan, Lynne, Petty and Orbison, all of whom he also worked with individually

(NOT) BY GEORGE!

Harrison's most sublime guest appearances



AMID strained relations within The Beatles, the formation of Apple Records gave Harrison the opportunity to collaborate with others and nurture talent. His great friend Ravi Shankar was an obvious choice to bring in, while his interest in the Hare Krishna movement led to a deal for the London-based Radha Krishna Temple. Other acts Harrison signed to the label included fellow Liverpudlian Jackie Lomax, US soul siren Doris Troy, New Jersey oddity Stephen Friedland (aka Brute Force) and Ronettes legend Ronnie Spector.

As for Harrison's list of guest appearances, it's too extensive to cover in depth here; suffice to say that his choices were nothing if not eclectic. You'd just as easily find him playing on albums by Leon Russell, Harry Nilsson and Badfinger as you would Mike Batt, the Monty Python team, Belinda Carlisle or Irish alt. rockers, Rubyhorse.

His first significant contribution beyond The Beatles came in 1968, when he and Eric Clapton co-wrote "Badge" (Clapton misread the word 'bridge' from Harrison's handwritten scrawl). Contractual reasons meant that Harrison billed himself as L'Angelo Misterioso for the official Cream recording, on which he played rhythm guitar. Among other pseudonyms adopted over time were Hari Georgeson, Jai Raj Harisein, P Roducer and, as a neat foreshadow of Ricky Fataar's character in The Rutles, George O'Hara.

Meanwhile, his friendship with Clapton endured throughout the decades, feeding into Derek And The Dominos and solo work. And it was solid enough to withstand the fact that Harrison's wife left him for Clapton during the '70s (at which point Harrison started referring to him as "my husband-in-law").

The other Beatles were never far from his radar either. In January 1970 he answered a call from Lennon to pitch up at Abbey Road for the recording of "Instant Karma!", alongside Klaus Voormann, Alan White, Billy Preston and producer Phil Spector. The latter's presence at the session was supposedly down to Harrison, who'd bumped into Spector at Apple HQ and persuaded him to come along.

A year later, Lennon co-opted Harrison for *Imagine*. He was kept busy with distinctive slide guitar parts for "I Don't Want To Be A Soldier", "Gimme Some Truth" and "How Do You Sleep?", plus dobro and guitar on, respectively, "Crippled Inside" and "Oh My Love".

Just a few months prior to the sessions, Harrison had hooked up with Ringo Starr, producing and co-writing "It Don't Come Easy". The single's B-side, "Early 1970" – working title "When Four Knights Come To Town" – deals with the messy demise of The Beatles, with Starr devoting a verse to each of his former bandmates and holding out hope of a reconciliation somewhere down the line. The song depicts Harrison as "*a long-haired, cross-legged guitar picker*" who prepares veggie soup at home with Boyd. Starr was quick to acknowledge Harrison's generosity when it came to lending his talents to others: "*A forty-acre house he doesn't see/Because he's always in town/Playing for you with me*."

Harrison was a regular presence at Ringo sessions. He went on to produce 1972's "Back Off Boogaloo" (on which he played several great slide breaks) and co-wrote the following year's "Photograph", conceived on a luxury yacht in the South of France. Among the guests on board was Cilla Black, who fancied recording it as a single. "No, it's too bloody good for you," Starr retorted, "I'm having it myself." Parent LP *Ringo* came sprinkled with Harrison's guitar phrases, including one choice moment when he and Starr were joined by Lennon for "I'm The Greatest".

"Just like that, no planning," recalled producer Richard Perry. "The three ex-Beatles recorded one of John's songs. Everyone in the room was just gleaming."

Harrison had also been at hand for Bob Dylan in May 1970, during a clandestine 12-hour session at Columbia Studios in New York. Together with producer Bob Johnston and sessioneers Russ Kunkel and Charlie Daniels, they ran through a bunch of covers and prototypes for Dylan's forthcoming *New Morning*. Harrison loved "If Not For You" so much that he swiftly covered it for *All Things Must Pass*, though the original 'jam' version didn't see an official release until 1991.

The Dylan connection was reinforced by a slide guitar cameo on the title track of 1990's *Under The Red Sky*, recorded in the midst of much Traveling Wilburys activity. Talking of which, Harrison was among the guests on Roy Orbison's 1988 comeback, the Jeff Lynne-produced *Mystery Girl*. His understated acoustic guitar runs through the comely "A Love So Beautiful".

Fittingly too, a year later, he joined the other Traveling Wilbury, Tom Petty, on "I Won't Back Down", the lead-off single from *Full Moon Fever*. Petty was suffering from a nasty cold that day, prompting Harrison to dash out and buy a ginger root, which he boiled in a pot and then shoved Petty's head into in order to clear his sinuses. It did the trick.

"I would assure his fans that George was just as beautiful as they pictured him," Petty commented not long after Harrison's death. "And maybe more." ***ROB HUGHES***

Ringo: conceived his 1973 hit "Photograph" on board a yacht with Harrison

DOUG MCKENZIE/GETTY IMAGES

"I'M GOING TO DO ME FOR A BIT"

Peter Jackson's *Get Back* series: George's best bits

JAN 3RD George is in a good mood after looking at *The Beatles Monthly*, and compliments McCartney's new appearance: "I think your beard suits you, *man*."

JAN 3RD "Fucking hell, I got a belt!" A microphone arrangement at Twickenham will give an electric shock to George, but no-one else. Undeterred, he makes a pitch for his own songs ("I've got a few slow ones if anyone's interested...") and for the band to look at playing some old songs like "Every Little Thing" on their proposed TV special.

JAN 3RD Since they're going to try and do everything live so they can do it on a TV show, which will leave them short-handed, George reminds The Beatles how good Billy Preston is at playing the keyboards. Bank that thought, someone.

JAN 6TH The famous Paul/George showdown. The pair work on the middle-eight for Lennon's "Don't Let Me Down" which George says sounds like "the same old shit". "I like the same old shit," Lennon counters. Things go downhill from there.

JAN 8TH George debuts "I Me Mine" to not much encouragement from The Beatles and some piss-taking from John Lennon. "I don't give a fuck," George says. "I'll have it for my musical."

JAN 10TH The visit by publisher Dick James puts everyone in quite a bad mood, not least George. "I think I'll be leaving the band now," he says, and walks out of rehearsals. In his diary he writes: "Left The Beatles. Went home." The episode ends with news that there has been a summit meeting at Ringo's house to patch things up. However: "The meeting does not go well."

JAN 13TH George is absent, gone to Liverpool.

JAN 16TH George comes back, as the band set up at Savile Row!

JAN 21ST George is back, in a lovely red shirt. He brings a new Smokey Robinson LP in.

JAN 24TH Paul begins a recollection of the band's trip to Rishikesh, prompted by him watching the film footage he and John shot there. They weren't, he says, really "themselves" there, which is a bit of a red rag to George.
GEORGE: "That's the biggest joke. To be yourselves. The point of going there was to find out who 'yourself' really is. If you were really yourself you wouldn't be any of who we are now."

JAN 24TH Tracking "For You Blue", with George wearing incredible furry boots. Might be the peak of good vibes in the film: George Martin puts some newspaper in the piano to make it sound honky tonk, Paul plays it. Lennon plays a great slide guitar part, but not before he's called attention in the room. "Don't talk while he's playing, gang..."

JAN 24TH George brings common sense to a debate about whether the film they are making on 16mm film stock (suitable for TV) can be blown up to 35mm (for cinema). Will cinemas accept it? "If they don't, they're fucking fools," says George, injecting a note of reality to proceedings, "because they're not going to get anything else."

JAN 26TH A very sweet moment you'll remember from the *Let It Be* film: George helps Ringo get a bit further on with the composition of "Octopus's Garden", showing him how to get back to the main tune.

> **"I've got a few slow ones if anyone's interested..."**
> GEORGE HARRISON

JAN 27TH George turns up at the studio in a dazzling pink pinstripe suit. If that wasn't good enough, he proceeds to work out, with Billy Preston's help, what the chords for "Old Brown Shoe" are called. Paul is enthused enough to help jam it out.

JAN 28TH George introduces "Something" to the party. Billy Preston plays along while reading the paper. Running through "Old Brown Shoe" reminds George to run out and try to "con someone" from a Bond Street shoe shop into bringing over some black shoes for him to try on.

JAN 29TH George has a chat with John, saying he has loads of songs, which will keep him going for years if he only has a "quota" on Beatles albums.
GEORGE: "I'd like to do an album. Of songs."
JOHN: "On your own?"
GEORGE: "Yeah. I'd like it... It'd be nice to get them all out of the way".
JOHN: "It'd be nice anyway."
GEORGE: "To hear what all mine are like together. I could give them away to people, but fuck all that, I'm going to do me for a little bit."

JAN 30TH The rooftop concert. George is the only Beatle who's dressed for a London rooftop in January. As The Beatles make their second tilt at "Get Back" the police arrive. When Mal Evans turns off George's amp to get his attention, which he does, George swings round and immediately turns it back on again. *JOHN ROBINSON*

The Beatles: Get Back is available to watch now on Disney+

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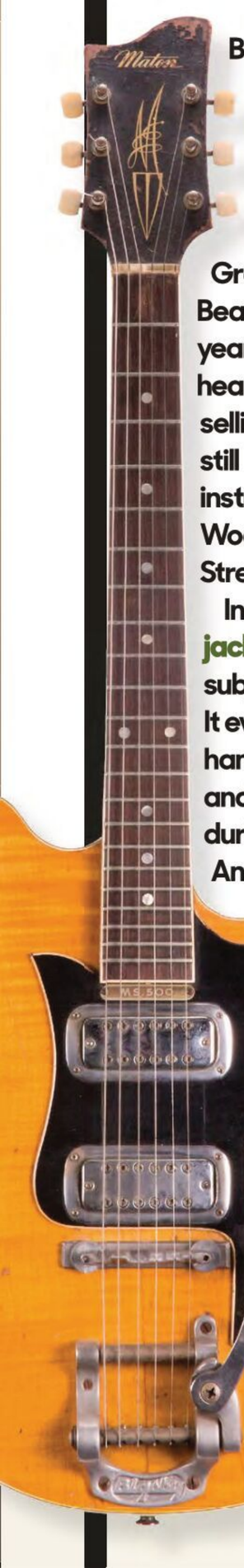
BEATLE FOR SALE

Living in the material world? Here are the George rarities to track down

As is the golden rule with most collectable vinyl, hang on to your first pressings. Harrison's two experimental albums during his time in The Beatles – 1968's ***Wonderwall Music*** and ***Electronic Sound*** (1969) – fetch around £120 each these days. A mint boxed copy of 1970's ***All Things Must Pass*** recently sold on eBay for over £300, while triple LP ***The Concert For Bangladesh*** (complete with 63-page book and custom-printed inner sleeves) went for nearly £240. This is small beer compared with a first pressing of ***Thirty-Three & ⅓*** on Harrison's then new Dark Horse label. Advertised, intriguingly, as "a genuine item from the record collection of a Labour MP" – who turned out to be Austin Mitchell – the hiked price of £850 is due to the fact that it contains a signed dedication.

Promos are always sought after too. A rare seven-inch acetate of **"Going Down To Golders Green"** (an outtake from the *All Things Must Pass* sessions) changed hands for £240 this summer. And if you're lucky enough to own a **white-label promo** of "Shanghai Surprise", credited to Harrison and Vicki Brown, expect to pocket over £500. Issued in 1986 to coincide with the Harrison-produced film flop of the same name, only 100 were pressed.



But the serious prices are reserved for Beatles-related memorabilia, chiefly guitars. In September 2018, Harrison's **Maton Mastersound MS-500**, played at various Fabs shows in July and August 1963, sold at auction for £347,000. Originally borrowed from a Manchester guitar shop while his Gretsch was in for repair, it was used at The Beatles' final appearance at the Cavern. Four years earlier, Harrison's **Rickenbacker 425** – as heard on "This Boy" – exceeded its estimate by selling for £390,000. The **sitar** market, however, still hasn't quite reached the same level. The instrument that Harrison played on "Norwegian Wood", purchased from Indiacraft on Oxford Street in 1965, went for £46,500 in 2017.

In other memorabilia, Harrison's **black leather jacket** from The Beatles' Hamburg days was the subject of fierce bidding at Bonhams in 2012. It eventually sold for £110,000. Also under the hammer were a pair of **Beatle boots** (£61,000) and the **western-style shirt** that Harrison wore during the Concert For Bangladesh (£23,750). And just last year, online site Catawiki sold a lock of his **hair** for £2,200. John O'Gorman, makeup stylist on *A Hard Day's Night*, had swept up strands of hair from all four Beatles, later giving them to friends as a wedding anniversary present. *MARK BENTLEY*

ALL THINGS MUST PASS: 50TH ANNIVERSARY SUPER DELUXE EDITION

What you need to know about the set and the new mix. *BY* TOM PINNOCK

YOU CAN'T "DE-SPECTORIZE" THE ALBUM

Rather than adding effects during mixing, the layers of echo that cloud this motherlode of songs and jams are often baked onto the tapes themselves. On this new mix by Paul Hicks, the fog is very much there, but daylight has been let in.

THERE'S MORE GEORGE

Harrison's voice is set forward, intimate and relatively dry, so that quivers or inflections in his singing that might have been subsumed in the mush are unearthed.

YOU LIKE BOB DYLAN AND THE BAND? GOOD, SO DID GEORGE

If we don't get an entirely new *All Things Must Pass* we do get a number of hypothetical alternative versions. For an *ATMP* where Harrison's passion for The Band and *John Wesley Harding*-era Dylan takes precedence, check out day one's acoustic guitar, drums and bass demos of "Behind That Locked Door", "Dehra Dun", "I Live For You", a slower, funkier "My Sweet Lord", the Bob co-write "Nowhere To Go", day two's plaintive "Run Of The Mill" or a dirgier "Art Of Dying".

HE WAS IN THE BEATLES YOU KNOW

See, please, the Fabs-y garage of the "I Dig Love" demo, or the three-minute demo of "Isn't It A Pity", which shines a light on how the song could have sounded if The Beatles hadn't rejected it for *Revolver*. For *ATMP* Harrison refused to dictate what the musicians played – after suffering such treatment at the hands of Lennon-McCartney. Curiously, like Lennon during the *Plastic Ono Band* sessions, he also has a jam on "Get Back".

IT'S NOT JUST A LONG ALBUM, IT WAS A LONG JOB

Two discs of proper early takes demonstrate how the final recordings came together through live performances, slowly. "Take 27", "Take 35"...take your pick!

IT'S DATED WELL...

Harrison may be the best-loved Beatle in 2021; his grace, humour and spiritual searching feels very relevant to now. Musically, too, he clearly makes sense in our anxious times: the most played Beatles song on streaming services, by a country mile, is the tender "Here Comes The Sun". This new mix updates his finest work for today, in greater detail than ever before, while still managing to retain the atmosphere that binds these 106 minutes together.

THE "UBER DELUXE EDITION" CONTAINS FRIAR PARK

Or some of it, anyway. The edition (cheaper ones are also available) includes "George with gnomes" figurines, various books, prayer beads – even a wooden bookmark sourced from a felled Friar Park oak.

stop me if you've heard this one before

"Why do you have to go?" BUD SCOPPA has an unexpectedly intimate encounter, at home with a candidly lonely Beatle...

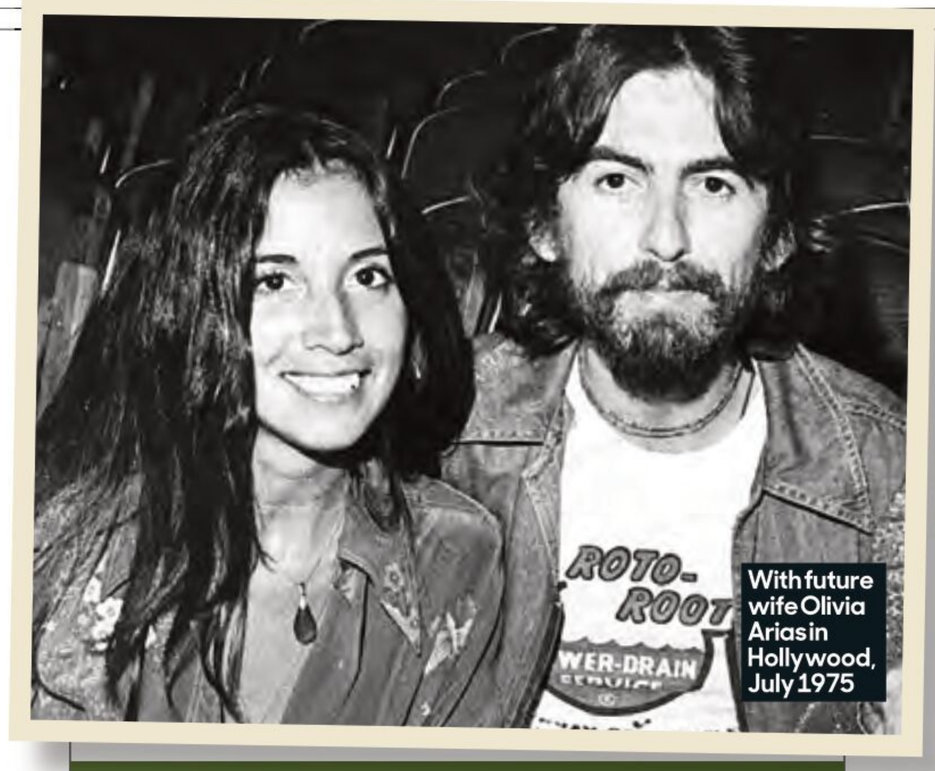
THE A&M Records lot was buzzing on a late-spring day in 1974 as word spread that a member of rock's royalty was scheduled to arrive at Herb Alpert & Jerry Moss's Camelot at 1416 N La Brea. But George Harrison didn't make his entrance with the expected stretched-limo fanfare; in fact, we wouldn't have known he was among us if the A&M campus hadn't been so open.

We peeked out of our bungalow windows as Jerry Moss greeted George, who was on foot, and escorted the ex-Beatle to his office at the front of the quad. Later, a rumour circulated that Johnny The Guard, the celebrity-challenged keeper of the La Brea gate, had refused entry to Harrison on the grounds that his name wasn't on his list. Rather than kicking up a fuss, the rumour went, George calmly walked to the Safeway next door and used a pay phone to call Moss's office to secure a pass. I don't know if it really happened that way, but I want to believe it, as that was the kind of guy George seemed to be.

In the end, A&M's distribution deal with Harrison's Dark Horse imprint lost a ton of money and ended abruptly. For me, though, it paid off bigtime that first summer, in the form of a round-trip ticket to London and reservations at the posh Blakes Hotel. As A&M's in-house editorial staffer, I was charged with writing the bios on Dark Horse artists, and on my arrival in London I sat down first with the gracious Ravi Shankar, then with the two Newcastle natives who made up the Sheffield-based duo Splinter (I couldn't understand a word they said). While in the neighbourhood, I hooked up with members of Supertramp, a promising art-rock band signed to A&M UK, whose co-leader Roger Hodgson was clearly a Harrison acolyte.

The trip got stranger. With news of Richard Nixon's resignation ringing in our ears, my colleague Andy Meyer (A&M's VP of publicity) and I climbed into a Jaguar sedan summoned to take us to Friar Park, George's pile in Henley-on-Thames. After we were ushered through the gate of Harrison's estate, what we encountered amid the splendour was an oddly lonely guy.

Rock-star regal with moustache and floppy centre-parted bangs, George greeted us from atop the long table that dominated Friar Park's baronial dining room. At that point, George was in his fourth year of post-Beatledom, and he seemed to have everything going for him: wealth, a successful career as a solo artist, his own label and the respect of his peers. But no amount of fame and fortune would be sufficient to overcome what George had experienced just weeks earlier. His wife Pattie had left him for his good friend Eric Clapton. We'd never met, but the 31-year-old superstar seemed genuinely happy to see us.



With future wife Olivia Arias in Hollywood, July 1975

"C'mon, stick around a while longer," said George. We explained we really had to leave

Andy and I were taken to a pub on the river for lunch, while George retired to his home studio to fiddle with some rough tracks from what would be his *Dark Horse* LP, which he'd planned to play us later that afternoon. When we returned, the tapes rolled, and George seemed eager, if not desperate, for our reactions, seemingly no more convinced of his music's validity than any other trier with some tunes and a guitar. It felt strange, to say the least, to be buttonholed by a Beatle for feedback, and though what I was hearing wasn't exactly jawdropping, there was no way I was sharing my thoughts at that precise moment.

Just as surprising as Harrison's artistic insecurity was his willingness to speak so candidly about the debris of his love life. He loved both Pattie and Eric, he said, and wished them happiness together. These expressions struck me as too gracious to be credible, but his words and demeanour seemed earnest. George always came across as earnest, even if his much-publicised spiritual quest seemed at odds with the beer and cigarettes he consumed nonstop in the studio. I didn't see any evidence of cocaine – not that I was looking for it. At any rate, he didn't offer us a toot.

The strangest part of that surreal day came at dusk, as we prepared to return to London for a previously scheduled social dinner, which we were very much looking forward to (oh, the short-sightedness of youth). "Why do you have to go?" George asked. "C'mon, stick around a while longer." Ignoring our explanations that we really had to leave, our new pal all but blocked the doorway to keep us there for a couple more hours. As we were whisked back to London that evening, too late to make the planned dinner, I remember thinking how lost he seemed in that gigantic estate, how shockingly alone. In bed that night I asked myself, "Did that just happen?"

Not long afterward, however, George made a return visit to the A&M lot, where he met Olivia Arias, an assistant in the marketing department. But they were just getting to know each other when he spent three weeks on the lot rehearsing his road band for a fall tour behind *Dark Horse* on the Chaplin soundstage, spreading George vibes across the lot throughout his extended stay. Andy and I flew up to Vancouver for the first show, and it turned out to be a disappointment. George, unused to singing on stage, had blown out his voice in rehearsals, and his face was contorted in frustration as he tried to make it through the set.

The post-show party was brutal, more like a wake. George was inconsolable, ignoring the feigned enthusiasm of well-wishers. I had no idea what to say, so I kept my mouth shut. The shows would improve as the tour progressed, but it was far from the triumph history had demanded it to be. In the long run, that slog wouldn't tarnish the Quiet Beatle's shining star; if anything, it was a much-needed reality check in his career as a solo artist. More importantly, Olivia awaited him back in LA. George's existential solitude was about to come to a Technicolor ending, complete with guitars sliding heavenward. ॐ

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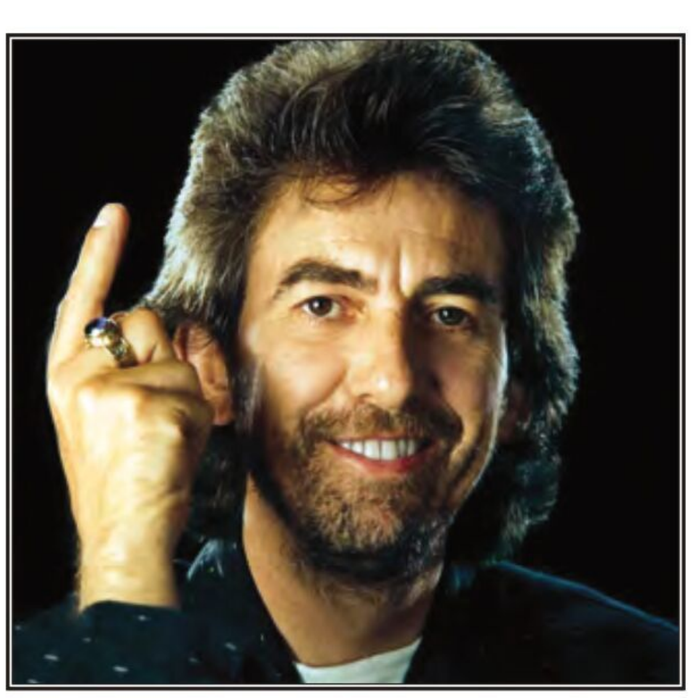
GEORGE HARRISON

As *All Things Must Pass* receives a deluxe anniversary release, The *Ultimate Music Guide* to one of the world's best-loved musicians. Never mind "the quiet one". Meet the other George Harrisons: Sonic innovator! Spiritual adventurer! Film producer!



AARON RAPOPORT/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES

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